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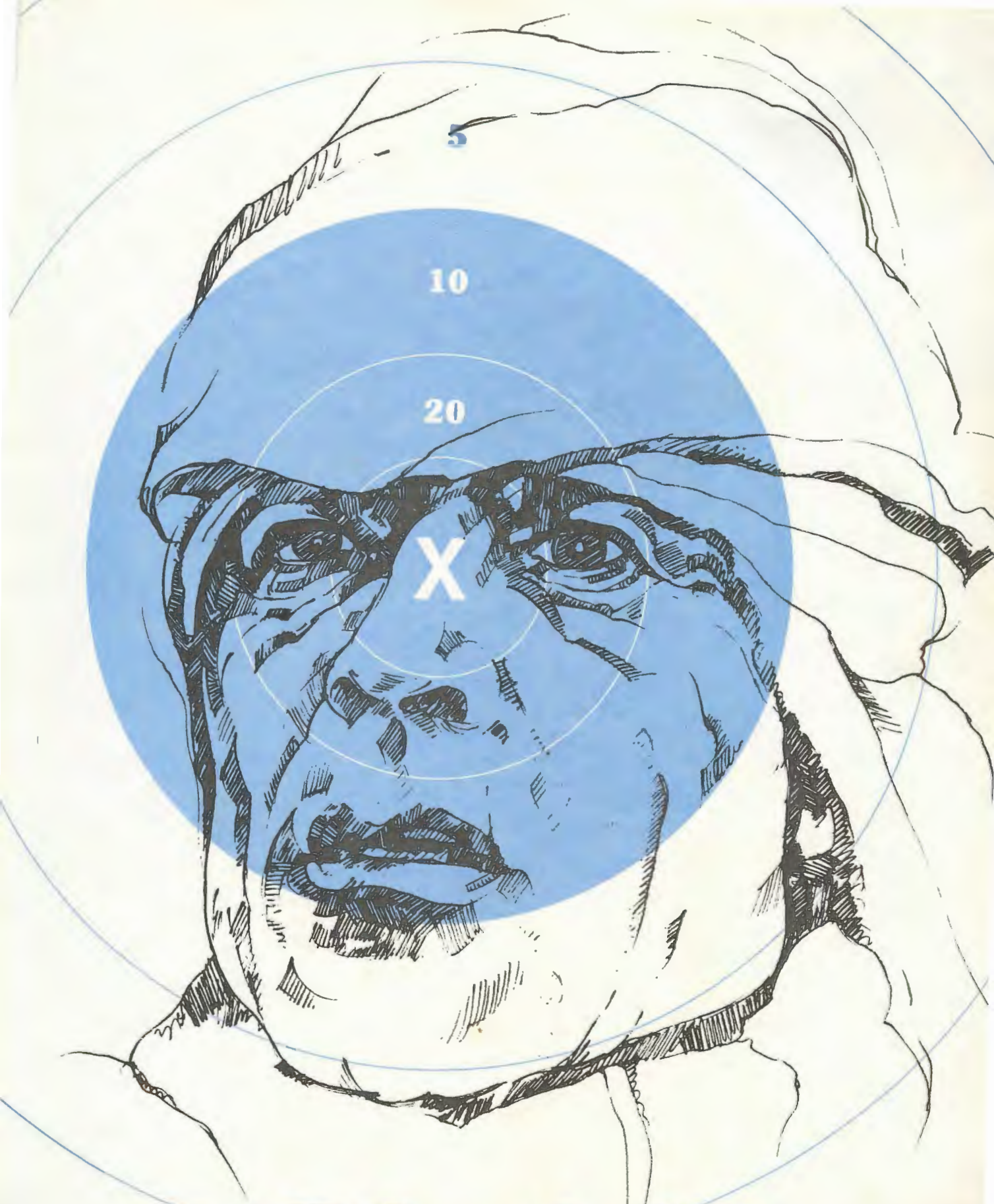
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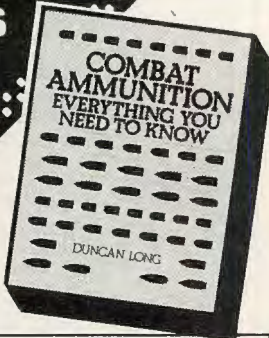
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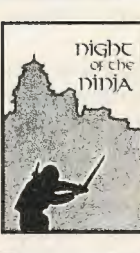
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# COMMAND GUIDANCE

by Robert K. Brown

**S**OMETHING stinks about the Pentagon's body count for the Vietnam War.

That isn't news, of course. Evenings in my A-camp at Tong Le Chon were often lightened by laughter about DOD's version of how many communists we all killed. I'm sure we wouldn't have laughed so loud if we'd had any idea how long we would regret the brass's arithmetic. Then, of course, we had no way of knowing that the big lies would be told about our own missing.

For some time now, the Vietnamese have been telling us that all lost American troops have been returned. Indeed, in the last few years the U.S. military and our own government have begun to echo the communist cant. Elaborate instrumentalities have been established to convince us that all our comrades who were alive were sent home. Finally, the Reagan administration smugly predicted that the POW/MIA issue would be settled for all and good in the foreseeable future . . . after all, that was a campaign promise.

Yet, perhaps because some keep telling the Vietnamese that they won't get agreed-upon aid until the books *really* balance, our old enemies are changing their song in the middle of the melodrama. In case you don't read page 30 of your local newspaper, over the last half-year the Vietnamese government has been making rumblings about "areas not under complete government control" and "independent guerrilla groups in Laos." Ordinarily, we could blow this off as excuses for the apparent disorder in Southeast Asia, but this time those offhand comments have a very

sharp point.

I think we're going to see live Americans appear out of the jungle within the next year. They'll be brought out with no advance notice, and I'd bet that the first live MIA will appear before the end of '86 — just a hunch.

So, what does that tell us about the last ten years of sweeping the POW/MIA issue under the rug? Well, in a funny way it all goes back to bookkeeping. Governments — like most businesses — hate loose ends. Problems aren't so much problems as accounting errors.

SOF doesn't want accounting: We want accountability. And we're going to get a good count on the

Americans who didn't come back from Vietnam — and what happened to them — even if we have to investigate the U.S. government's involved offices one at a time. A couple of years ago we ran an exposé on the government's lack of support for the Joint Casualty Resolution Center. That resulted in a sudden upgrade of



facilities for the office then tasked with accounting for American dead and missing.

In July's SOF we take on the Army's Central Identification Laboratory in Honolulu, Hawaii. Read our report on forensic anthropologist Dr. Michael Charney's contentions that there are irregularities concerning CIL's personnel credentials and scientific findings.

I am dedicated to forcing an honorable resolution to our national shame over POW/MIA accountability. Our exposé of government laxity in bringing back our men abandoned in Vietnam isn't our first venture into this area, and it won't be our last. ✕

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**COVER:** Rounds fly out of a 60mm mortar as Guatemalan troops lay down fire for advancing infantry. Although the guerrillas are on the ropes in Guatemala, the army has continued its system of patrols and civil defense. Government vigilance has paid off; in March 1986 the guerrillas declared a unilateral cease-fire. Such an unprecedented move illustrates the lack of support for communism from the Guatemalan people. Photo: Steve Salisbury

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## A TIGER'S LIFE...

Sirs:

For many years when my family and I visited the Toledo Zoo one of the first animals we sought out was Tuffy the Tiger. Tuffy lived in a corner cage of the mammal house, in front of which was a sign that proclaimed he was a gift of the 93rd Transport Company, U.S. Army.

Your April issue story, "Soc Trang Tigers," filled in part of Tuffy's history. I called the zoo to find out the rest. Ms. G. Savata, curator of mammals, kindly answered my inquiries about this particular tiger and I thought SOF readers might be interested, too.

Tuffy arrived at the Toledo Zoo on 3 July 1962 in a crate made from steel runway matting. The zoo had agreed to pay the freight charges for Tuffy which, considering the weight of the cage, was more than the animal was worth. The zoo had been offered Tuffy so that the members of the 93rd who lived close to Toledo could visit their mascot when they returned from Vietnam.

During his time at the zoo Tuffy fathered many offspring. Unfortunately, none reside in Toledo any longer.

Tuffy died on 13 June 1980 of liver and kidney ailments. I have always enjoyed animals and the big cats are of particular interest to me. Tuffy was a kind of special cat, but then to me all Vietnam vets are special.

D.J. Parker  
Deshler, Ohio

*For all you vets who knew Tuffy this must come as bad news. But then, for all of you who wondered what became of him, now you know.*



## FLAK



## STAND UP FOR THE MIAs...

Sirs:

Well, I just subscribed after four years of purchasing SOF off the newsstand. I subscribed for two different reasons. The first is I can hardly get to a newsstand fast enough to get a copy of SOF. I think that is because the public finally realizes that one hell of a lot of crap and untruths are coming out of the TV news and off the newspaper wire services.

The second reason is that I wanted you to know that you have my support on the way SOF is going for broke with the MIA issue. We have to keep the officials in Washington searching for the truth about the MIAs.

I hope you don't mind if I Xerox a page or two of SOF and send it to my senators and congressmen. I want to keep them up on the truth about the MIA issue.

Earl Kelly  
Twin Falls, Idaho

*Thanks for the kind words. SOF is proud to be a part of keeping the MIA issue in front of the public eye and one of the best ways to accomplish that is to keep pressure on our congressmen. For all you interested readers, the July issue of SOF will carry an article on the government's current progress on the search for MIAs in Southeast Asia.*

## POLICY PROBLEMS...

Sirs:

Mr. Sochurek's interesting article on DoD's "Project Agile" (April '86, SOF) inadvertently demonstrates what is wrong with the entire U.S. approach to counterinsurgency operations. Instead of spending \$28 million per year and decades of research on "developing new social science techniques," I suggest that an outlay of \$3 and two hours spent in reading *SAS: The Jungle Frontier (The Borneo Campaign)* by Peter Dickens would provide all the answers necessary. Simple common sense and the successful SAS experience dictate the following rules:

- 1) Get in early on the conflict.
- 2) Use small teams of two to four highly trained and experienced men who know the local language.
- 3) Send these teams into local villages for a long time (three to 12 months).

4) Make sure the teams are friendly and useful to the locals in terms of medical aid, small construction projects, education, etc.

5) Make sure our teams are on the side worth fighting for. If our allies consist of corrupt torturers, murderers and oppressors, the battle may already be lost.

Follow these simple rules and our main problem will be that we are swamped with intelligence about the enemy.

Lew Toulmin, Ph.D.  
Asst. Professor of Political  
Science  
The American University  
Washington, D.C.

*Your letter brings up the obvious need to rethink U.S. policy toward counterinsurgency. High-tech and overwhelming firepower are rarely enough to defeat a well-organized insurgency. However, there are two points to keep in mind. First, your suggestions basically run along the lines of U.S. Special Forces COIN methods during the early years of the Vietnam War. Second, it would be somewhat narrow-minded for the U.S. military to use the British SAS experience in Borneo and Malaya as the bible for future COIN operations. Even Vietnam differed enough from Borneo to negate some of the techniques. And revolutions will get even more complex in the future when, as with the current trend in terrorism, the superpowers take a*

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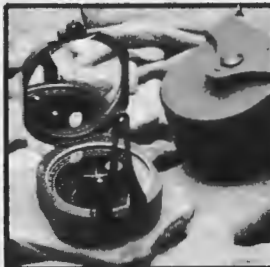
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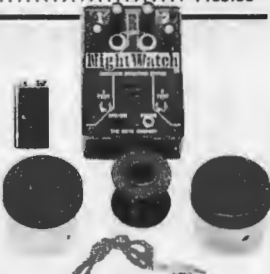
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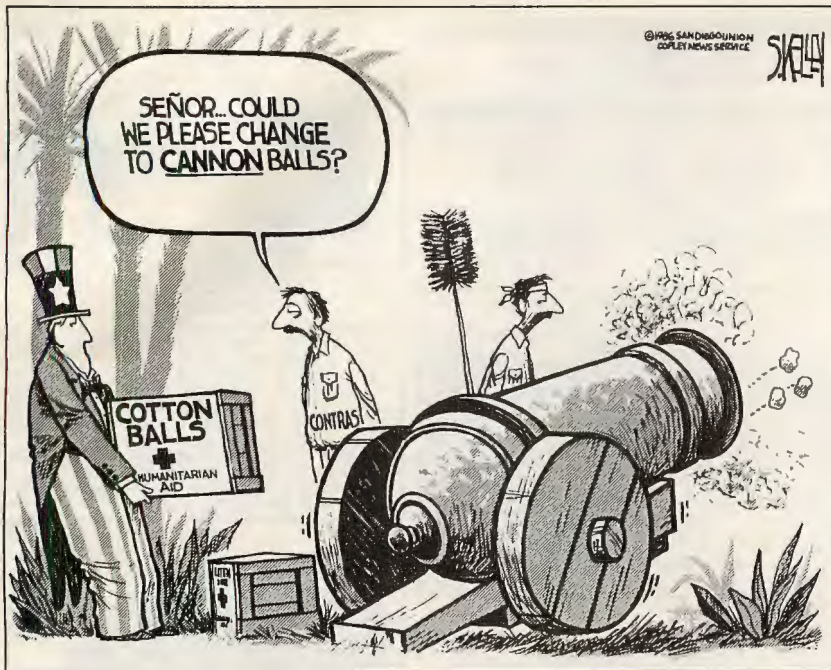
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SF86





more active role in supporting their clients on the cutting edge of the Third World.

Perhaps the key concept in your letter regards which side we choose to fight for. Supporting status quo governments in the Third World simply because they claim to be anti-communist is not enough. The United States needs to look toward the long run rather than just to the end of four years.

## THE IRE OF IRELAND...

Sirs:

Yesterday I purchased a copy of your magazine for the first time: I was drawn to *Soldier of Fortune* because of the cover which indicated it contained a story on an "IRA Bomb Factory." Since my family comes from the north of Ireland and

I visit there every year, I have an interest in the Irish Republican Army. I believe that the "story" is a complete fraud. It was not about an "IRA bomb factory," but a complete piece of fiction, and very badly written fiction at that.

In the interest of fairness I believe that my \$3.50 should be refunded. I do not believe that you will do so since I do not believe there is very much honor to be found at *Soldier of Fortune* as indicated by that "article" on the IRA. A British soldier does not seem like a very good choice to tell us about the Irish Republican Army.

Patrick McVeigh  
Floral Park, New York

I have been a purchaser of your magazine for years and a subscriber for the last couple. Normally I would not even take the time to write or explain my actions, or lack of them, but I feel it's only fair to explain my failure to renew my subscription.

Until I visited Ireland, I was not particularly aware or concerned with the activities there. I have seen the British troops "perform" there against very nice, proper, Christian people and I quickly understood why there is so much anti-military/police feeling by the Catholics in the north.

Bob Bisbee  
Flushing, New York

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Whenever SOF runs a story on Northern Ireland we get plenty of flak regarding our "stand" on the issue. Let's set the record straight. First, SOF has never made an editorial statement on the situation in Northern Ireland. Stories are usually sent in by free-lance writers who are familiar with the problems there. Second, almost every irate letter sent to us regarding our coverage of Ireland fails to provide a single shred of evidence as to why the article was "a piece of fiction." If that's true, where are the rebuttals? SOF welcomes the chance to print an opposing story. If any of you IRA fans out there have one, let's see it.

## RESPECT FOR THE DEAD...

Sirs:

In March of 1985 I made a sentimental journey to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. As your previous article on the memorial had stated, it was like visiting a place of reverence. One could feel the presence of the souls of friends and comrades lost in Vietnam. I found, however, that the memorial had two different facades. The Black Wall stood in reverence for those who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country. The other, the three soldiers, stood on the crest overlooking the memorial. The three "vets" were to honor those of us who survived. But the feeling they impart is one of comradeship and sorrow for those who gave their lives so that we may celebrate the gift of life and freedom. I found it appropriate that the three "vets" gaze in solitude and respect toward the Black Wall, as if the firefight had just ended.

As for myself, I cried tears of joy when I found one name not chiseled into the black marble. A close friend, whom I thought had died at Bien Hoa, had survived. A sentimental journey.

De Oppresso Liber — Free From Oppression.

Ken Warkocki  
Riverside, California

Many men lost close friends in Vietnam, but you seem to be one of the lucky ones. Not many people have gone through all these years thinking they had lost a buddy only to find that he is alive. We sincerely hope that you can find him and renew an old friendship.

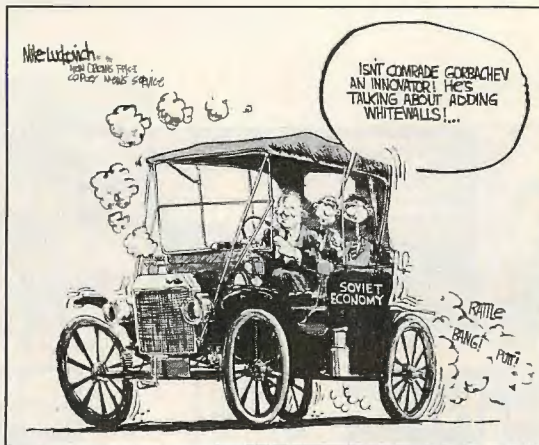
## TEXAS VETS...

Sirs:

The Texas Vietnam Veterans Memorial is finally a reality. It will be built in Dallas to honor the 3,405 Texans who served in Vietnam. The memorial will be located in Fair Park, part of the Texas State Fair Grounds and the most visited tourist attraction in the state. It will encompass an area of 12,000 square feet and will be surrounded by 80,000 square feet of landscaped area. The memorial will be constructed of Texas granite and a waterfall will surround four tablets bearing the names of those who were KIA. An eternal flame will stand vigil over another tablet listing the names of those who are still MIA. The memorial will be dedicated on Veterans Day 1986.

Those interested in more info or in making a donation should contact: Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund of Texas, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 50366, Dallas, TX 75250.

Royce E. "Bo" Scott  
Deer Park, Texas



## BIG MAC INDIGESTION...

Sirs:

Peter Kokalis' articles are always factual and loaded with info difficult or impossible to come by otherwise. Even when they might hurt, I still enjoy them. I have to admit I'm a MAC M-10 owner and I enjoy shooting the little beast, even though I have to admit it's not the world's best SMG.

Gary E. Lenk  
West Hartford, Connecticut

Don't feel bad. Peter Kokalis owns three MAC-series submachine guns. And he even finds small pleasure in shooting them. When used up by the British SAS, MACs are given an indecent burial by plowing them under the earth with a bulldozer in the back of the range.

## A QUESTION OF LANGUAGE...

Sirs:

I have been an avid reader of your magazine for over four years and a subscriber for over two. As a Vietnam veteran and anti-communist I appreciate the efforts of your staff. I find most of your articles very informative and accurate. The reason I am writing you, however, concerns a small inaccuracy in the article "Dien Bien Phu Drop" by Howard Sochurek.

Mr. Sochurek states that the name "Dien Bien Phu" is translated in T'ai as "Border County Prefecture." "Dien Bien Phu," as well as Deo Van Long's title of "Phu Tri" (province chief) are Vietnamese, not T'ai. The T'ai words for "Dien Bien Phu" and "province chief" are "Muong Thanh" and "chau muong," respectively.

The T'ai Federation existed formerly as the Sip Song Chau T'ai, an indigenous political entity under Deo family control well before the French arrived in the area. The imposition of Vietnamese place-names and titles by the French was simply a means to psychologically limit the political power of the Deo family.

David K. Moore  
Alexandria,  
Virginia

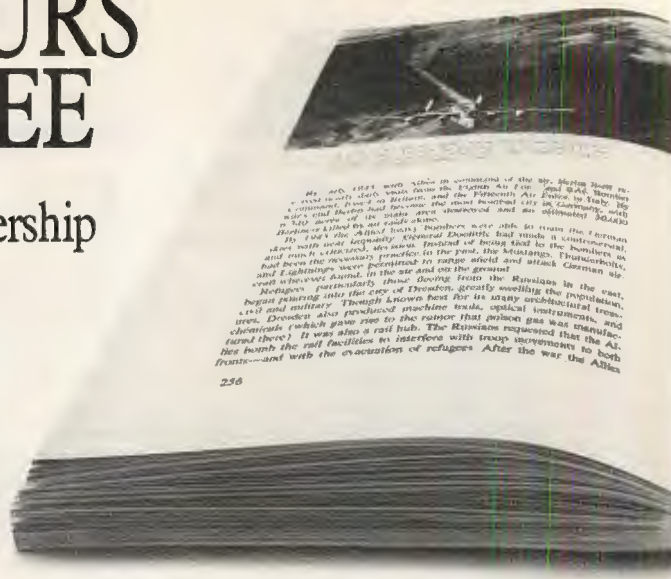
The semantic subtleties of Southeast Asian languages are beyond the scope of our editorial staff so we're going to have to take your word for it. If any of you readers out there have anything to add, please let us know. ✕

EDWARD JABLONSKI

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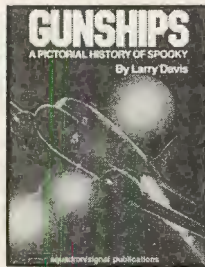


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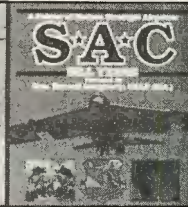
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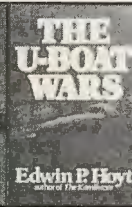
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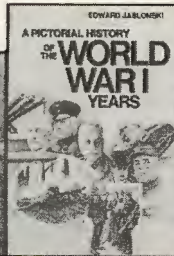
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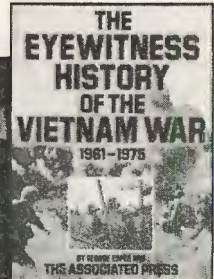
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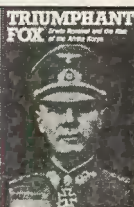
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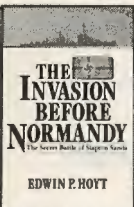
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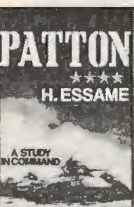
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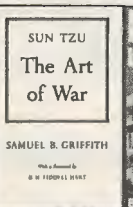
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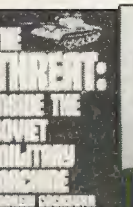
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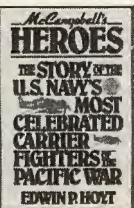
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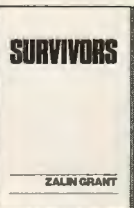
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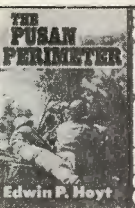
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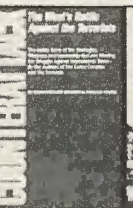
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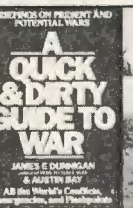
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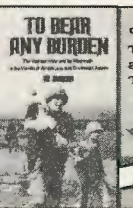
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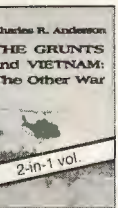
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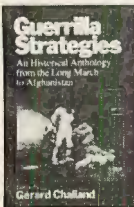
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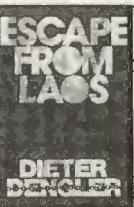
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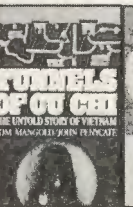
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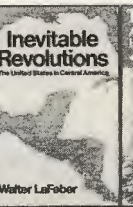
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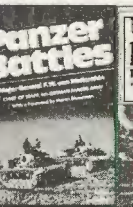
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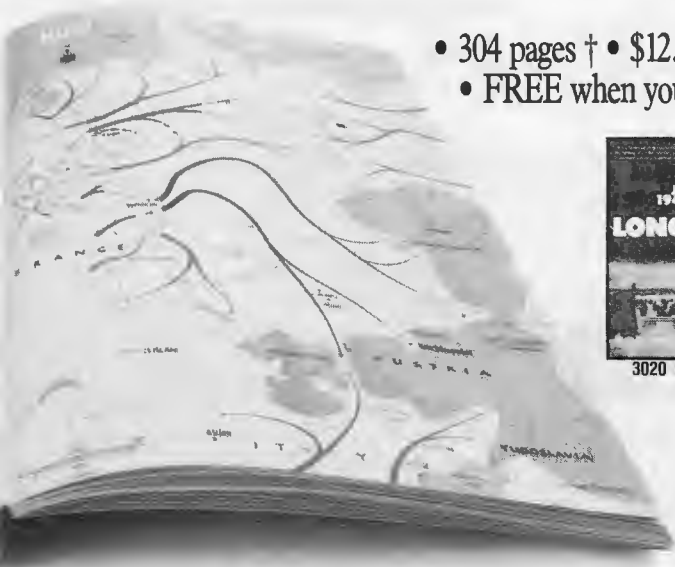


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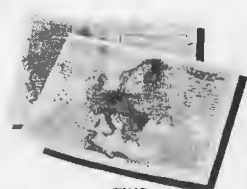
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## TERRORISM TRAINING...

The opening of Iran's new "College of Information and Security" was approved 19 January by Iranian officials in a high-level Tehran meeting. This was confirmed by the official Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), which reported that the "college" will be located in Shiraz, a provincial city in the mountains of southwest Iran. A class of 250 will begin training in April, various SOF sources report, who say instruction will prepare students for careers in Iranian intelligence — and terrorism. Approximately 200 of the students will be drawn from the special operations branches of Prime Minister Mir-Houssein Mousavi's intelligence department — known as the Center for Documentation — and Iran's Revolutionary Guards. Fifty and possibly more students will come from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, sources told the magazine.

Instruction in Shiraz will be done by Iran's few remaining professionally trained intelligence officers with minimal assistance from a few Syrian and North Korean advisers. Study will include intensive indoctrination in the teachings of Ayatollah Khomeini and the Islamic Revolution, disinformation dissemination, the infiltration of target groups, intelligence gathering and counterintelligence, intelligence analysis, cryptology and code-breaking, and small arms and explosive training.

Watch out. The Class of '86 is sure to be a killer.

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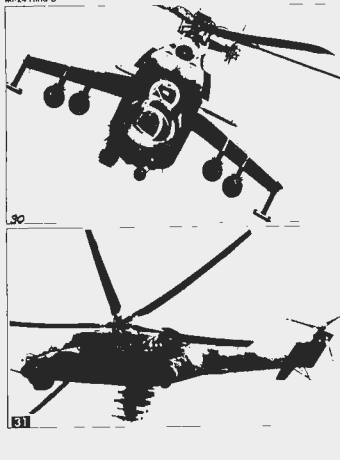
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Mi-24 Hind D



Pilotos y tripulantes sandinistas en este momento están volando helicópteros de ataque Mi-24 "Hind" dados por la Unión Soviética, contra los luchadores por la libertad nicaragüenses. Consideramos esto insignificante y absolutamente amenazante a la lucha por la libertad en este hemisferio.

Alguien viene que hacer algo antes de que estos helicópteros letales estén siendo utilizados para extender la tiranía comunista más allá de las fronteras nicaragüenses. Por eso, nosotros ofrecemos \$1,000,000 U.S. al primer piloto o tripulante que entregue un Mi-24 a santuario en cualquier país neutral (trónculo con Nicaragua).

Lo pediremos el dinero del premio en etapas específicas al piloto comandante del helicóptero o a su tripulación entera cuando el Mi-24 haya sido entregado y recuperado.

Hacemos esta oferta como un gesto de apoyo para los nicaragüenses valientes quienes reconocen y resisten la tiranía del régimen sandinista. La entrega de un helicóptero soviético Hind de las manos de los opresores será un símbolo de solidaridad para toda la gente centroamericana que ama la libertad.

— Robert K. Brown Editor, SOF

## HOTTER HELICOPTERS...

As if the dreaded Mi-24 helicopter is not enough for Afghan freedom fighters to contend with, the Soviets have introduced a new gunship into that ravaged theater of war. Pakistani sources cited by *International Defense Digest* report sightings of the Mi-28, a smaller but much faster attack helicopter. It is similar in configuration to the U.S. AH-64A Apache, but slightly larger. Jane's *All the World's Aircraft* for 1984-85 states that the Mi-28 (NATO reporting name: Havoc) "is believed to resemble the Lockheed AH-56A Cheyenne more than the Apache. This suggests that it could represent an air-to-ground/air-to-air combat partner for the Mi-24" (NATO reporting name: Hind). Like the Mi-24, the Mi-28 has weapons pylons mounted on either side of the fuselage. It also mounts a heavy machine gun in the nose. Havoc's engine size is very close to that of the Hind. The Mi-28 has a 250-kilometer combat radius and a maximum speed of 300 kilometers per hour.

## POSTERS, T-SHIRTS...

Bob Ogilvie, general manager of the SOF Exchange, asked for a Bulletin Board reminder about SOF's T-shirt design offer. Any reader who submits a T-shirt design and slogan that we reprint will receive a \$50 SOF Exchange gift certificate. And of course a T-shirt of your design. Mail your design/slogan ideas to: **Bob Ogilvie, Manager, SOF Exchange, P.O. Box 687, Boulder, CO 80306.**

The SOF Exchange also is offering for sale our famous \$1 million reward poster for the first defector to fly an Mi-24 Soviet attack helicopter out of Nicaragua. It's the same poster SOF correspondents have distributed in villages, cities and jungle hide-outs in Central America. The posters are printed in English and Spanish, and we have a new batch on order printed in Russian. Please specify which language you prefer. Posters are \$5 each postage paid, or \$12 for a complete set. Write: **Reward Poster, SOF Exchange, P.O. Box 687, Boulder, CO 80306.** Two Mi-24s recently defected from Afghanistan to Pakistan, both fully armed and one with a complete ammo supply, were trundled aboard U.S. Air Force C-5s and returned to the United States, our sources say. But SOF is pleased that its reward offer for a Nicaraguan Mi-24 was reprinted in *Le Point*, a French weekly news magazine. So buy a poster. Help spread the word.

## GRENADE STORIES...

*Soldier of Fortune* wants to hear in writing from U.S. vets of Operation Urgent Fury to liberate Grenada. Write your memories along the lines of SOF's "I Was There" monthly feature. Selected submissions will be used to compile a full-length feature story to honor the mission's third anniversary. Submissions must include your name, branch of service, rank and unit designation. Please advise if you want to remain unidentified. Photos, particularly color slides, are needed, but **must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Do not send originals.** Mail submissions to: **Grenada File, c/o Soldier of Fortune, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, Colo. 80306.** Material used will be subject to standard payment rate.

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After SOF printed the definitive article on the U.S. Army's squad automatic weapon procurement problems in the April 1986 issue, the Pentagon decided to change the game. After having canceled the fiscal year 1984-88 solicitation for 28,750 additional M249s, the Army has decided to ask for changes in the design and then reopen solicitations for CONUS manufacture in the first quarter of 1987.

While there is no plan on the part of the Army to hold new SAW trials, the Pentagon will ask for a few changes in the design. Among the major alterations to be made on the weapon are: 1) addition of a strengthened buttstock, 2) addition of a strengthened folding carrying handle (which is also used to change the barrel), 3) addition of a heat shield or reconfigured forestock to cover the barrel, 4) replacement of the recoil spring with a different buffer assembly (the new buffer will

*Continued on page 112*

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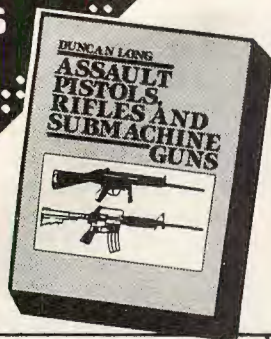
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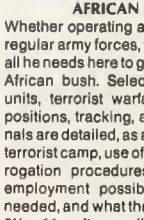
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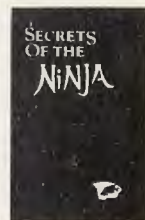
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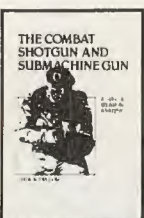
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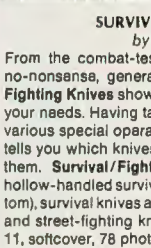
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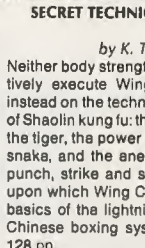
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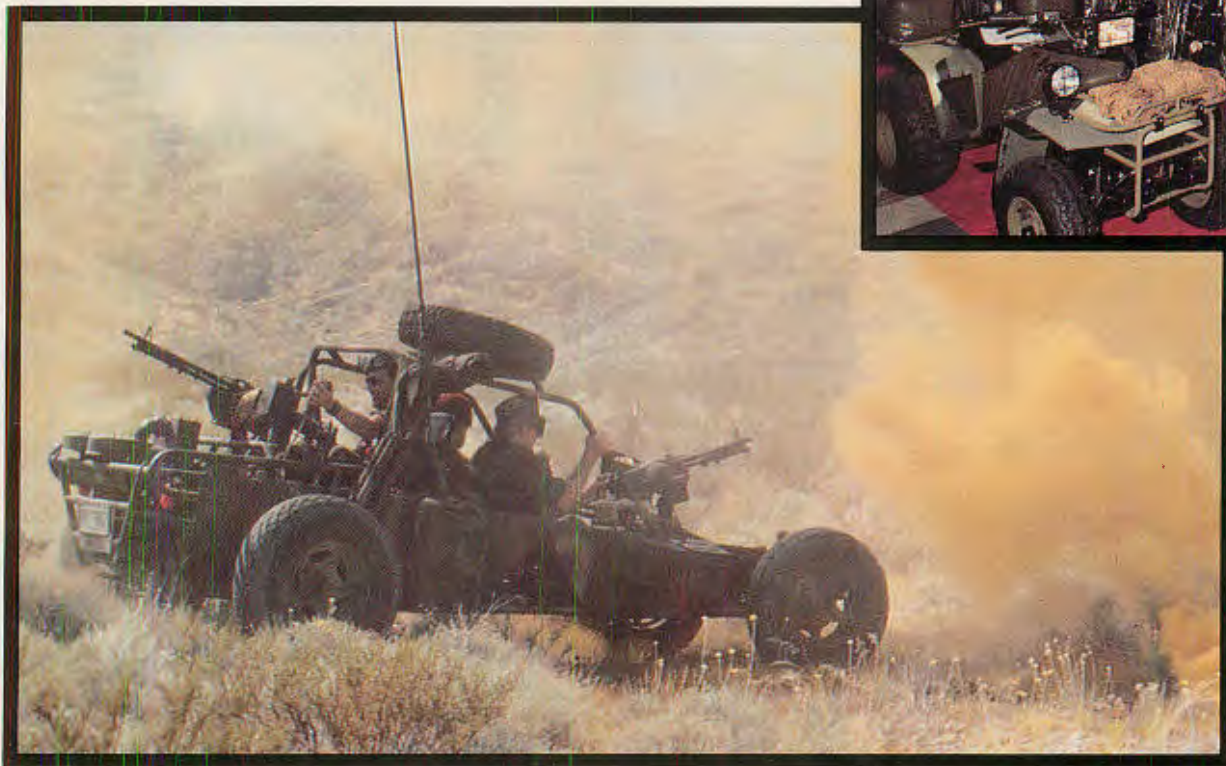
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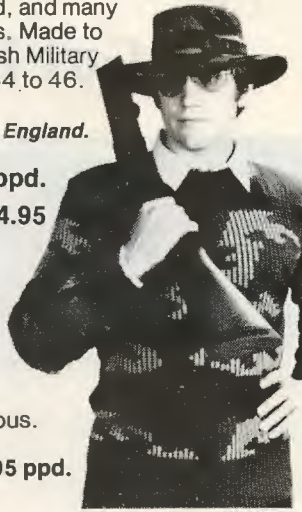
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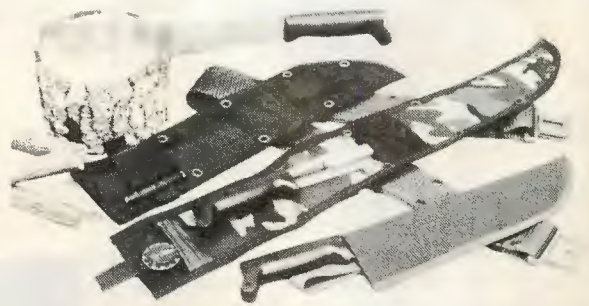
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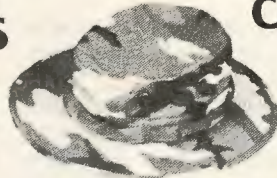


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**C**OPS are pretty intuitive about impending danger. Take, for instance, the way my stomach does a slow dance when the shit is about to hit the fan. I used to tell myself it was the food at the local grease pit, but that was before it almost saved my life.

In January 1985 I was assigned to the midnight shift for a midsize Ohio police department. Compared to the afternoon shift I was finding the inactivity of the graveyard a little aggravating. But on the evening of 31 January my stomach had been giving me hell and the Roloids weren't helping at all. I figured all the junk food I had been consuming had finally caught up with me. I didn't realize that my belly was trying to tell me something.

My already queasy stomach started doing a jitterbug when I saw our supervisor for the night — a rookie substitute. Both regular supervisors had called in sick. He was a good guy, but everything was by the book. That made me nervous.

At 0355 the dispatcher informed me and the sub corporal of an armed robbery at a gas station just off a major highway. An electrical box at the station had been blown with a 12-gauge slug. While the corporal went in to get a better description, I went after the suspects.

I scoured the interstate, but no luck. As I drove down the interstate looking for a spot to turn around I remembered what an old policeman told me once. He said, if you're looking for something, give it everything you have and when you're about to give up, look for five more minutes. I'm glad I did.

Taillights of a small car flickered in the distance. I decided to fall in behind the car, and noticed that it was a Mazda with one driver. I was looking for three suspects in a Chevette. A little disappointed, I gave up my search and passed the Mazda. Then I looked in my rearview mirror and saw two heads pop up in the back seat. It dawned on me that there's not much difference between a Chevette and a Mazda GLC. The Mazda GLC slowed down behind me... there was little doubt that these were the armed robbery suspects and I was not in the best of defensive positions.

I was foolish not to have checked the car before I passed it and I was even more foolish as I signaled to exit. I hoped they wouldn't follow me off the ramp. They didn't, and continued down the interstate. Then I immediately jumped the exit ramp and fell in where I belonged — behind them.

I radioed the dispatcher of my position and intent to stop the suspects. They wanted me to wait for some back-up, but the closest car was at least



# I WAS THERE

by Hickory Taylor

## Gut Level Defense



**Officer Taylor's high-speed pursuit finally ended when the suspects slid on ice and crashed into a snowbank. All three were apprehended.**

five miles away. Besides, I had already turned on my emergency lights. I was committed.

As I closed in on the Mazda it began to accelerate and zigzag between traffic lanes. I turned on my blues. At 90 mph I saw a suspect climb out the open window and perch himself on the door, fumbling with a shotgun. When he took aim my foot went to the brake, my head went under the dashboard and my mind raced as the blast shook the patrol car.

I peeked up over the dashboard. I was worried the round might have disabled the car. But it continued to race down the highway in hot pursuit of the suspects.

My buddies from Vietnam once said that when you get shot at enough, you lose a lot of fear and work on calculated instinct. I guess that's what happened to me. I was planning my every move... and planning what I was going to do to the shotgunner if I got the chance.

I had backed off a good distance hoping he'd quit shooting, but with little luck. As I maneuvered back and forth across the road, that little Mazda matched every zig for my zag. I heard the words of the dispatcher calmly assuring me that back-up was coming. She could be calm; she was safe.

This chase can't last forever, I thought, so I had better get ready. Unlocking the rack, I removed my shotgun and placed it across my lap. I was sitting all the way over in the passen-

ger's seat with my head just peeking over the dashboard. I hoped he was aiming at the driver's side.

Finally, help appeared. The red flashing lights of the state patrol car never looked better. We went after the suspects. When they swerved we swerved, and when they turned off the highway we followed. Then they lost control and crashed into a snowbank.

Their tires were still spinning when the doors flew open. As I bailed out of my car I saw the man who had shot at me during the 22-mile chase. He backed out of the car and began to raise his rifle. I yelled for him to drop it, but he just turned and aimed at me.

It was my turn for some quick-reflex action. I let him have a load of number four buck. A soft jab into his belly, and he fell in the snowbank. Contrary to what's shown on TV, he did not get blown backward — he kind of floated to the ground.

The two other suspects staggered out of the car after they were convinced the shooting had stopped. Their friend was still alive, squirming in the snow. He survived, and I'm sure he will remember me for some time. I succeeded in blowing out a lung, messing up some bowels, and lodging a few pellets near his spine.

He will be mobile again someday and once he's out of prison, I'm sure he'll go out and do it all over again. I was not surprised to learn he had just gotten out of jail after spending six months' time on an earlier armed robbery.

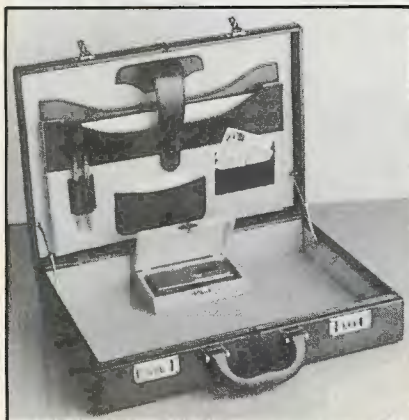
I learned a great deal from this experience, but I guess mostly I learned to listen to my stomach. ✕

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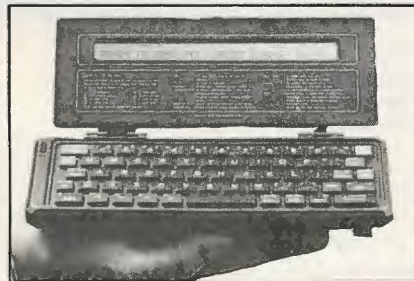
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**S**PANISH guns have been known as garbage since the 1930s, when pathetic S&W and Colt revolver copies flooded the U.S. market. Despite some earnest efforts, Spanish firearms continue to be tarred with the same brush. No matter how bad the Spanish weapons rep has been, the firm of Star Bonifacio Echeverria, S.A., of Eibar, Spain, has remained dedicated to excellence since its inception in 1905.

While Star is most noted for its pistols, selective-fire machine pistols were produced from 1930 until 1952 and submachine gun development commenced in the early '30s. Immediately following World War II the Spanish government adopted Star's Z-45 submachine gun in 9mm Bergmann-Bayard. Generally a spin-off of the German MP-40, the Z-45 possessed some innovations: a forward bolt safety, lower cyclic rate than the MP-40, wooden grips and handguards, quick-change barrel (of dubious value), semiautomatic as well as full-auto fire capability, muzzle compensator, full-length barrel jacket and a retracting handle on the receiver's right side.

The 9mm Bergmann-Bayard cartridge, also referred to as the 9mm Bayard Long, 9mm Bergmann Long or simply the 9mm Largo, first appeared in 1903. It was developed by Theodor Bergmann and his designer Hugo Schmeisser (who had nothing to do with the MP-40) for a pistol made under license in Belgium by Pieper whose trademark was "Bayard." Adopted by the Danish as the Model 1910, it was for years their official military side arm.

The 9x32mm cartridge has long appealed to the Spanish — with little justification. Similar, but longer than the .38 ACP cartridge (overall case length, .900-inch), it has never been produced in the United States. Its .355-inch-diameter FMJ 125-grain bullet moves out of most pistol barrels at 1,120 fps. While its velocity is equivalent to that of the 9mm Parabellum cartridge, the projectile is 10 grains heavier. Any increase in performance is marginal, and in recent years even the Spanish have jumped aboard the 9mm Parabellum bandwagon.

By 1960 Star had another submachine gun under development. After several prototype versions, it was introduced in 1962 as the Z-62 in caliber 9mm Largo and later as the Z-63 in 9mm Parabellum. While revolutions in submachine gun designs have long passed into history, the Z-62 is an intriguing — although overly complex — weapon.

Firing by means of pure, unlocked blowback from the open-bolt position, the Z-62/63 rattles away at a very



## FULL AUTO

by Peter G. Kokalis

### Spain's Star SMG



**The Z-63 is an interesting, if complicated, submachine gun designed by Star Bonifacio Echeverria of Spain.**

proper cyclic rate of 550 rpm. A 7.9-inch barrel is enclosed in an overall envelope of 18.9 inches with the stock folded and 27.6 inches with the stock extended. Weight, empty, is a moderate 5.8 pounds.

The tubular steel receiver extends forward to form a ventilated barrel jacket with 48 holes. A line of six nubs has been punched into the receiver tube on the right side which serves as an interrupted guide rail that mates with a slot milled into the bolt body. A small rectangular cut on the receiver's left side, covered with an oval steel patch brazed to the receiver's exterior, accepts an unusual bolt inertia safety when the bolt is in the forward position. A receptacle for the trigger-housing group has been brazed to the bottom of the receiver in line with cuts to accept the sear, ejector and magazine — much closer to the center of gravity than on the Z-45. A generous-sized ejection port has been milled out of the receiver's top, offset to the right.

The folding retracting handle rides in a slot cut into the left side, up front in the barrel jacket portion of the receiver. Nonreciprocating, it's attached to a

spring-loaded rod which pushes against the bolt face to cock the weapon. Placed in this location, debris entering the slot cannot reach the bolt group or trigger mechanism.

Protected by a substantial hood, the fixed-blade front sight is adjustable for windage zero by tapping it one way or the other in its dovetail cut into the receiver tube. A flip-type rear sight with 100- and 200-meter apertures rests within protective ears mounted on the receiver's rear end. The sight radius is 14 inches. All of this is more than adequate for a submachine gun.

The folding stock has been taken directly from the Czech Vz 25 submachine gun and can be unfolded with a magazine in the well. Every bit as sturdy and not at all as complicated as that of the Sterling, it can be employed in moments. Just pull down on the top portion of the buttplate — which serves as a forearm in the folded position. Rotating this section on its spring-loaded hinge pin will withdraw a retaining piece on the bottom of the buttplate from an elongated hole in the receiver under the muzzle and simultaneously lock the buttplate in position for firing from the shoulder. Pivot the entire stock assembly until it snaps into a hook at the rear of the receiver. To refold, take a firm hold on the stock's two sheet-metal side bars and pull

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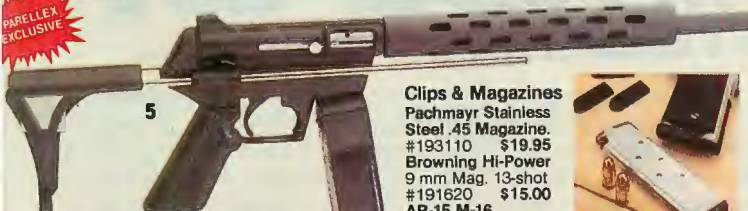
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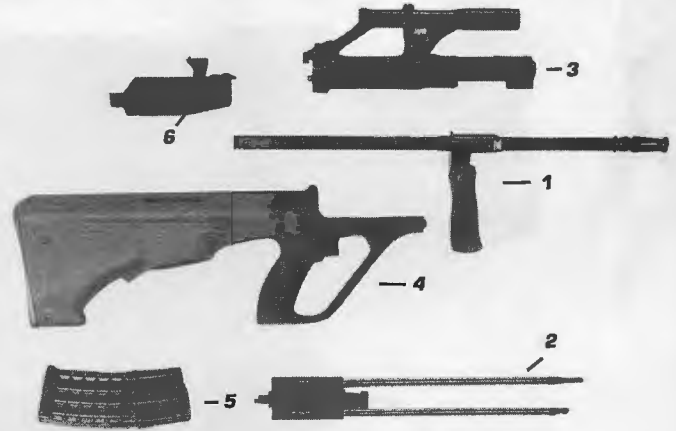
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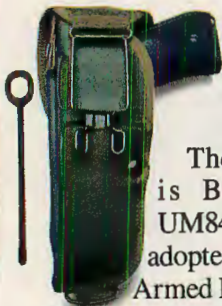
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back, away from the retaining hook, until you can fold the stock assembly under the receiver. Pull the buttplate away from its spring-loaded axis pin and rotate into place under the receiver. It sounds far more complicated than it really is.

After phosphating, the above components and the trigger housing/magazine well were painted with a black baked-enamel crackle-finish. Tough, chip-resistant and highly effective in retarding corrosion in tropical climates, it can be found on firearms ranging from the Sterling submachine gun to Chartered Industries' SAR 80 assault rifle, though crackle-finishes have never appealed to the American public or armed forces.

Attached to the muzzle end of the receiver is a cap with six sprockets which correspond to six peculiar tapered fins on the barrel's muzzle end. They must have been copied from a Buck Rogers ray gun. They serve no purpose other than to retain the barrel in the receiver. Except for the fins, the six-groove, right-hand-twist barrel closely resembles that of the Sterling. And like the Sterling's, it must be removed through the back of the receiver after the other components have been withdrawn, although there are no troublesome allen screws and it only has to be rotated slightly to align the fins with the front cap sprockets.

Things start to get odd upon inspection of the bolt. Cylindrical in configuration and undercut to pass over the ejector and magazine lips, at first glance it looks like the Sten gun type. It isn't. A spring-loaded, floating firing pin protrudes from the bolt face only after a spring-loaded push rod, also on the bolt face, is depressed when it slams against the barrel after the bolt goes into battery. The push rod pivots a hammer that drives the firing pin forward the instant the bolt closes. This supposedly eliminates the possibility of a slam-fire, but it doesn't always work that way, as we shall see.

Another push rod, directly above, operates the peculiar bolt inertia safety. When a blowback-operated submachine gun is carried with the bolt forward on an empty chamber and a loaded magazine is in the well, the bolt may jump rearward far enough to strip and fire a round from the magazine if dropped. The spring-loaded inertia safety protrudes out the left side of the bolt body into the receiver recess and prevents the bolt from moving back if it receives a sharp blow at the rear. When its push rod strikes the barrel face the safety rotates back into the bolt body so that it does not inhibit the bolt's rearward travel after the cartridge has been fired. It sounds great,

*Continued on page 103*

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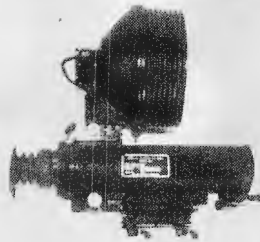
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# COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

by John Coleman

## Immediate Action Drills



A good portion of every war, be it conventional or otherwise, is spent on patrolling. Whether it's a fighting or recon patrol chances are good that you're going to run into the enemy, or he's going to run into you at some point down the line. It probably won't be a planned encounter; both sides will be surprised as hell, but whoever reacts first — and most effectively — is more likely to walk away to tell the tale.

How can you plan for a chance encounter? Or get out of an enemy ambush? Or take full advantage of a split-second opportunity to spring your own ambush? A cool, calm and collected thought process is one answer, and intensive training is another. But there are more practical steps you can take on the ground, and they fall under the heading of immediate action drills (IAD).

There are four basic IADs you're likely to run up against while you're out lurking in the bushes — the simultaneous chance encounter, the chance encounter, the hasty ambush and the counterambush — all of which are highly probable on any battleground anywhere in the world.

A simultaneous chance encounter — sometimes called the "oh shit!" connection — takes place when two enemy patrols run into each other at the same time. It's a common occurrence because no matter how actively you patrol, you can be sure the other

**Charging an enemy ambush. It may be your first, last and only option for survival. Photo: Dept. of Defense**

side is doing the same thing.

Now, your reaction to this or any other unexpected encounter will be predicated on two main factors: your patrol's mission and its size. A four-man recon team that runs into an enemy 16-man fighting patrol had better beat feet or someone's going to collect on a life insurance policy. For our purpose, though, let's assume your eight-man patrol, armed with two squad automatic weapons and the normal array of individual weapons and grenades, is out running a terrain recon and bumps into a fighting patrol from the other side.

"Who shoots first, wins," has to be your immediate reaction. The first man to see the enemy, probably the patrol leader (PL), must snap off an aimed shot and drop one of the opposition. It's a heavy psychological advantage and immediately puts the enemy on the defensive. Since the rest of your patrol might not be in a position to actually see the bad guys, the first man to shoot has to pinpoint the target by shouting something like "enemy front!" or "enemy right!" to bring everyone into the game.

With that knowledge, the rest of the

*Continued on page 105*

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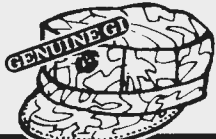
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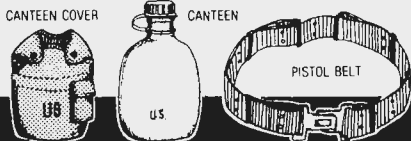
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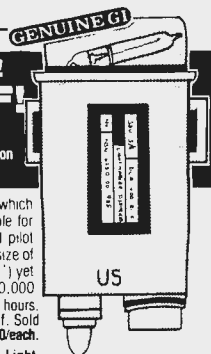
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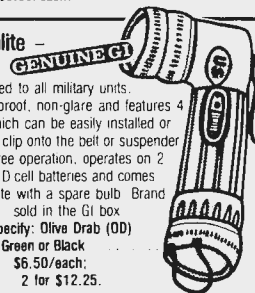
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## GET A GRIP

As far as civilian weapons go, shotguns are probably the ones most often dressed up as weird creatures that only vaguely resemble their original form. In the vanguard of manufacturers marketing accessories for shotguns and assault rifles is Choate Machine & Tool Co. Inc., an outfit with a well-deserved reputation for churning out quality gadgets for a variety of firearms.

Shotguns get plenty of attention from Choate's designers and they haven't yet run out of ideas. A new forearm has joined the ranks of Choate's other excellent accessories, but this one has something more than just Choate's name behind it — this one was born from a government contract.

Choate originally made a few of these pistol-grip forearms for an unnamed government agency and, according to reports, the reaction was favorable. So favorable, in fact, that Choate has decided to try them out on the general public.

The rationale behind this radical departure from the status quo lies in the assumption that conventional pumpgun forearms often become hard to hold during rapid firing. If you are ever in a situation where you have to fire off round after round, rest assured that your hand will probably slide off the forearm at least once during the fusillade. When holding a pistol grip, your hand finds

itself in a more natural position than the standard horizontal hold. Pointing becomes easier and recoil more manageable.

Still, Choate's new forearm isn't as convenient as it could be. With its traditional backward-slant design, the pistol-grip forearm becomes awkward to hold as it is moved through the slide sequence. The human hand simply isn't comfortable in that position. Perhaps Choate might take a page out of the Hungarian book of small-arms design: The AMD assault rifle has a forward-slanted front pistol grip — a much more comfortable and natural position for the forward hand to be in.

# ADVENTURE QUARTERMASTER



This criticism aside, it's certainly a good enough accessory in its present form to warrant attention from law enforcement or others who hunt more than ducks with their shotguns.

Choate's vertical forearm is attached to a solid blued steel tube which replaces the conventional forearm. Installation is simple — only a forend key (included) is needed to change your shotgun into a fast-handling weapon. If you send \$25, that is.

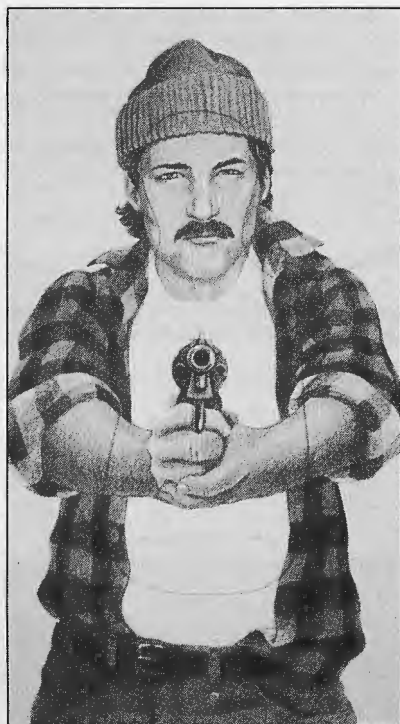
For more information write: Choate Machine & Tool Co. Inc., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 218, Bald Knob, AR 72010. Phone: (501) 724-6193.

## TARGETS OF OPPORTUNITY

The new trend in target-range training seems to be realistic portraits of thugs and terrorists armed with a threatening array of weapons. One company in particular stands out in the field of realistic targets.

A company called Armstec has come out with a series of six life-size torso targets of men (and one woman) holding guns. Their concept was aimed at the law enforcement market, but they are now trying it out on the public.

Each target is marked with a kill zone along the same lines as the standard silhouette so those of you accustomed to perforating traditional man-size targets will feel right at home. For extra realism, weapon overlays are provided. Each target has its arms positioned in the same way so that the overlays can be placed over the hands of the target. In case the shooter gets too accustomed to a single thug's face, Armstec has also provided such



innocent items as cameras in the overlays. That way you'll watch the weapon and not the face.

The targets are produced on high-quality paper and each target has a varnish application which will make it more durable when used in wet weather. Overlays are self-adhesive.

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## GERBER BMF

In the April '86 issue of *Soldier of Fortune*, we previewed Gerber's new BMF combat knife. Release has been moved up, so the BMF is currently available through the Cutlery Shoppe, Dept. SOF, 220 9th St., Boise, ID 83702. Phone: (800) 231-1272. Cost is \$119. ✕

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**S**OMEONE once said that a survival knife is the knife that you have on hand when you need it. That's true. When push comes to shove, we rarely have time to select the knife of choice. That's why the blade I carry on me all the time is the best tool and deadliest blade I can *get my* hands on. And yet people don't object to this — they simply don't know that it's there.

Survival takes many forms. In the wilderness-survival scenario, a large knife is the usual choice. But in the wilderness, concealability is not an issue. In the city it's a different ball game, and a knife with a 9- or 10-inch blade hanging off your belt is guaranteed to make you the center of a lot of unwelcome attention. It is for this reason that a lot of small boot knives, push daggers and other hide-out knives are popular. There's a widely held belief that a hide-out knife with a 3- to 6-inch blade is just the ticket for personal protection. But why use a BB gun for defense when you can have a .44 Magnum?

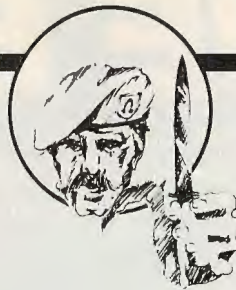
The knife that I carry everywhere I go has a blade that is 9¾ inches long. It measures 15 inches from the back end of the handle to the tip of the point, and weighs just under 16 ounces. Most people would consider it to be a large knife, yet I carry it in public.

Let's face it, it's not socially — or legally — acceptable to carry a fixed-blade knife in most areas of the United States. Nonetheless, many Americans elect to carry a blade as a last ditch defense. Yet most select a knife because it is small and concealable, not because it is a good tool or weapon.

Big knives are capable of making big cuts. When serious hacking and chopping is needed a large knife works better than a small one . . . and a knife fight is about as serious as hacking and chopping ever gets. Unfortunately, when men quit carrying fixed-blade knives in this country due to the widespread use and acceptance of handguns they forgot how to carry it safely, comfortably and unobtrusively.

The problem is not the knife. The problem is the sheath.

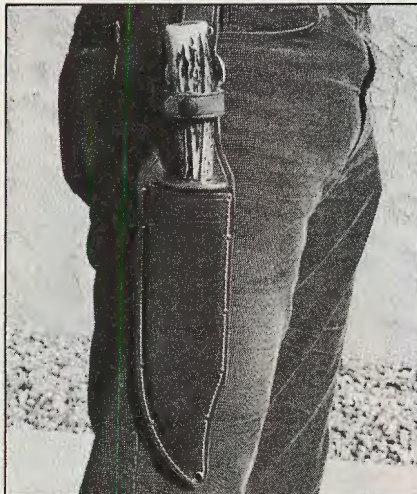
How you carry a knife has a great bearing on its utility and comfort. In most parts of the world except for the United States and some industrial regions of Europe, the knife is worn by inserting it *through* the belt, rather than hanging from it. This keeps it close to the body and prevents it from swinging and banging the wearer, becoming an irritant. Americans, however, like to hang things from their belts, and the knife sheaths made in this country since the first decade of the 20th century have been equipped with belt loops.



# BATTLE BLADES

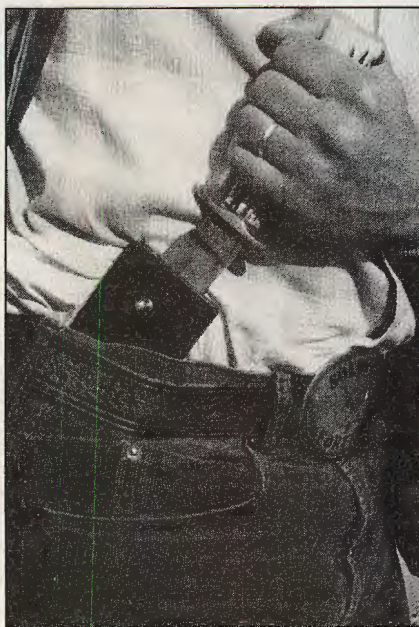
by Bill Bagwell

## More Blade, Less Sheath



**A sheath like this Western Cutlery version can be irritating when it hangs loose and slaps you on the leg. In addition, it can never be concealed.**

**The most practical sheath design I've seen is simply a fitted cover for the blade with a stud. Unfortunately, it's not commercially manufactured. To make your own, try Tandy's Leather and ask for a Sam Brown post.**



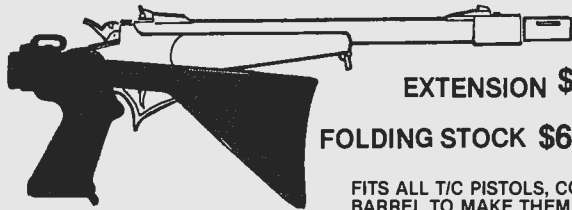
As far as I know, we are the only people in the world who equip a knife sheath with a belt loop that can be as long as the handle of the knife, and then use a thong to tie the sheath to our leg to keep the whole thing from getting in the way and swinging. We are also the only people in the world whose large knives have a tendency to pull their pants down as they walk. So how do you get around this problem? Simple. Don't use a belt loop and thong.

It is easy to conceal the blade of a knife, even if it is 9 or 10 inches long, because it is relatively wide and thin and does not leave a bulge under your clothing. Add a cover for the blade, and it is still concealable. But the handle, the thickest part of the knife, is the hardest part to hide. Add a belt loop that runs up behind the handle and you have just doubled the thickness of what is already the bulkiest portion of the implement. The addition of a belt loop also forces you to wear the knife outside clothing in plain and obvious sight.

The cutlery of Sheffield, England, did a landslide business selling large knives to Americans from the early 1830s to just after the Civil War. They developed a nifty sheath design that allowed one to carry his knife exposed on his belt, or concealed under clothing. It's instantly removable without loosening a belt or making any adjustments to one's clothing. This sheath is simply a cover made to fit the blade, with a stud — sometimes called a frog — that protrudes from the side of the sheath about ½-inch down from its throat.

The knife is worn by inserting the sheath between the belt and trousers with the stud facing the outside. The stud engages the belt and keeps the knife and sheath from sliding through, the normal tension of the belt holding everything securely in place. When the sheath is broken in, the knife can be drawn and replaced in silence with one hand, and when the blade is with-

*Continued on page 107*



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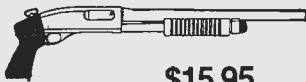
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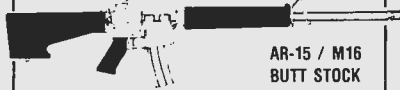
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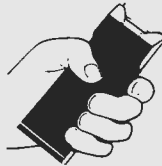
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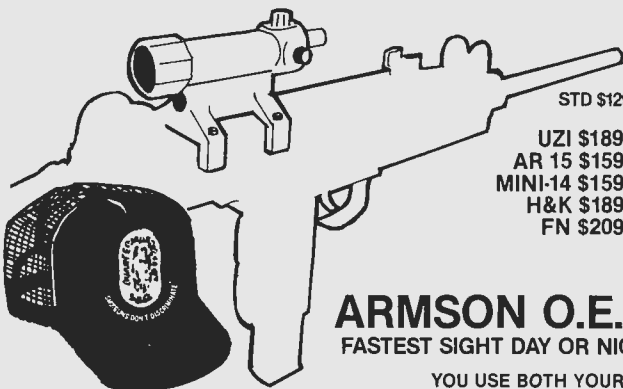
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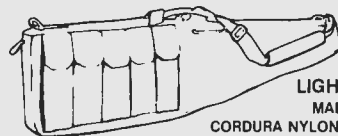
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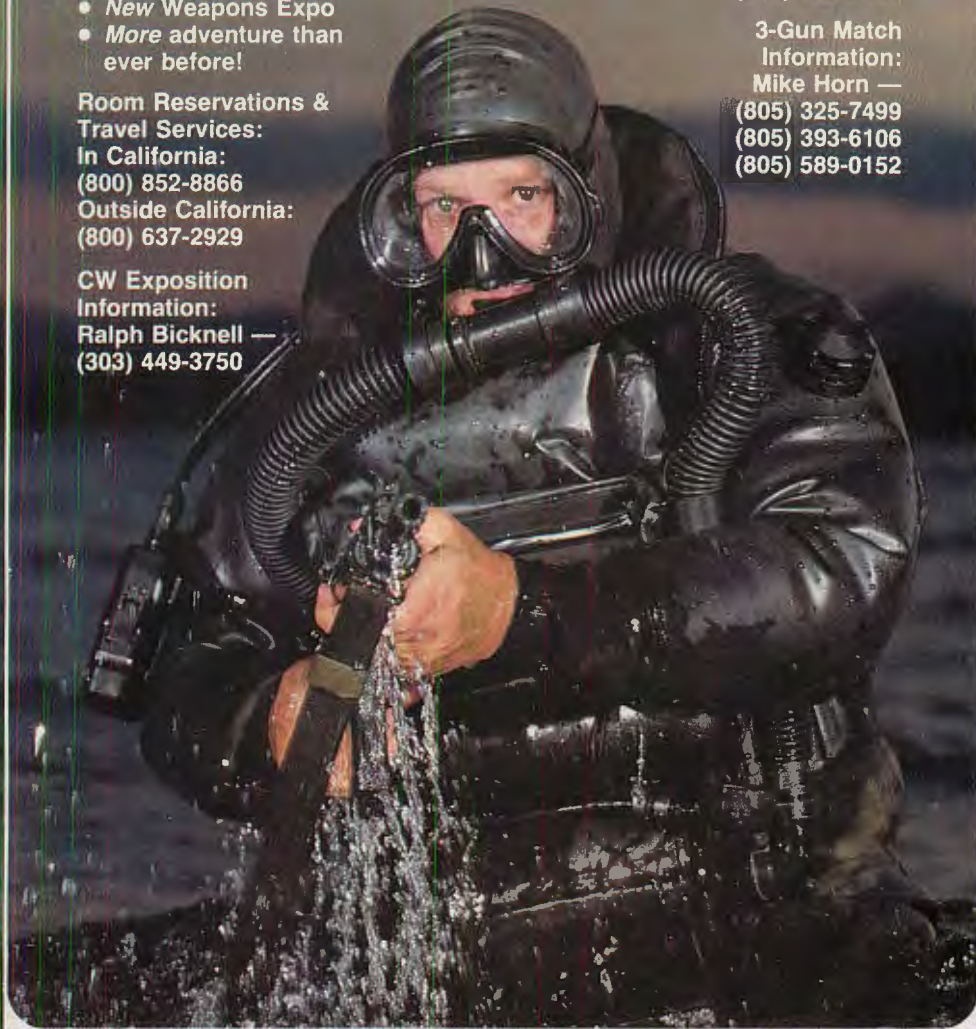
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**RICE PADDY GRUNT: UNFADING MEMORIES OF THE VIETNAM GENERATION.** By John M.G. Brown. Regnery Gateway, Dept. SOF, 950 North Shore Drive, Lake Bluff, IL 60044. Hardcover. \$18.95. Review by John Coleman.

**O**UT of the bitterness and national hostility toward Vietnam and its warriors has come a flood of books written by bitter and hostile Vietnam vets. Most have not been able to step out of their own trauma long enough in order to put their experience — and Vietnam — effectively into words.

A few books — *Charlie Mike, The 13th Valley, 365 Days* — have reached the plateau of strong, emotional writing combined with a solid story line, and that's what makes the Vietnam War a historical reality for the 1980s' generation of readers.

John Brown's *Rice Paddy Grunt* rightfully takes its place among those books.

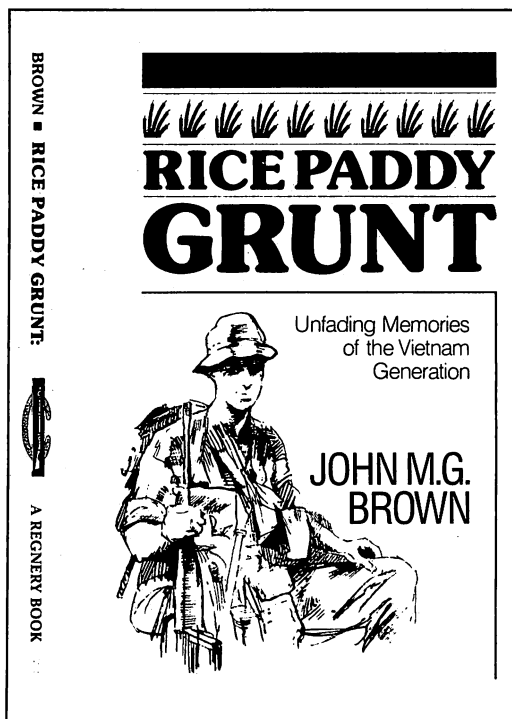
*Grunt's* strength lies in its ability to tell two stories — that of a combat soldier slowly coming to grips with his own disillusionment toward the war, and the anti-war movement across the United States which sapped the critical will to win in Vietnam. Permeating both is that cross mixture of emotion which makes sense of the words, "Nobody's right, and everybody's wrong."

Brown avoids the easy trap of letting his own raw feelings run rampant over the story he has to tell. His fear and loneliness, and sense of inevitable futility, bleed through this account of his 18-month tour, but they are a haunting background rather than a focal point. The real focus is the war and those who fought — and opposed — it.

And Brown's war is the Vietnam most combat vets remember. Endless patrolling and the adrenalized shock of ambushes, tunnel-ratting through dank and fear-infested crawlways, hot insertions into the middle of Charlie's Country — the experience winds itself around the protective cocoon every combat soldier weaves to protect his own private sanity and vision of the World.

This juxtaposition between the vet's-eye view of the war and the surging anti-war movement in the United States sets *Grunt* apart from the average there-I-was novel. There was a war on two fronts, and Brown — as a grunt in the trenches — does a good job in balancing the mixed morality of the peace movement against the futility of the war. He doesn't bludgeon the reader with reasoning; rather he inexorably draws the audience to his own conclusions by coherence of his artistic construction of the war. Brown vividly characterizes the forces that drove

## IN REVIEW



some Americans to war and others to pacifism.

All this is not to say that *Grunt* is a perfect book. It's not. Brown occasionally bogs down in his own research, and we run into page after page of overmeticulous recounting of unit designations and deployments . . . and body counts. There are also some technical mistakes vets will be quick to catch, and transitions from

war to anti-war might leave some readers in the dust.

Still, these are minor imperfections in an otherwise important reflection of the Vietnam era. It was not an easy time for soldier or civilian to understand, and *Rice Paddy Grunt* might be the harbinger of a new breed of war novel which will give us perspective rather than bitterness.

**GURKHA: THE ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF AN ELITE FIGHTING FORCE.** By Christopher Chant. Blandford Press, Dept. SOF, Link House, West St., Poole, Dorset, BH15 1LL, England. 1986. 160 pp. \$17.95. Review by Dale Andradé.

### GURKHAS.

The very mention of their name has inspired fear in anyone foolish enough to call them enemy. From the earliest days of British colonialism on the Indian subcontinent through the war in the Falklands the Gurkhas have gained a reputation for ferocity and competence in battle.

*Gurkha* presents a photo-filled chronicle of these legendary masters of

small-unit combat. From their obscure beginnings as tribesmen in the remote Himalayas, Chant traces their rise — first as opponents, then as defenders of British India — to today's hardened elite battalions, covering everything from their military exploits to the details of daily life. Illustrated with many rare and some never-before-published photos, this book gives a full sense of that combat mystique commanded by no other fighting force.

For the reader who wants a concise, but complete, introduction to the Gurkhas, this may be the perfect starter. There are more detailed works on the Gurkhas' exploits, but for a primer, Chant's book is hard to beat. Read it through and then head to the library for more on these famous fighters. ✕

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w/report	1 gross (12 dz.)	7.90	20 gross	117.50
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# COMPACT COLTS

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Text & Photos  
by Peter G. Kokalis



ABOVE: Colt's dynamic duo — compact hideables in .45 and .380 ACP.

The stainless-steel Officer's Model is a compact pistol in .45 ACP.



**H**AVE you ever tried to conceal a large-capacity 9mm pistol? I have. And it isn't easy. While everyone else has been scurrying about stuffing as many rounds as they can into the magazine wells of the current crop of double-action 9 mils, Colt has concentrated instead on the requirements of compact, hideable pistols with their newest offerings — the Officer .45 and .380 Mustang ACP.

Series 80 .45 ACP Colt pistols function by the principles perfected by John Moses Browning. Locked-breech, recoil-operated, the barrel and slide of these pistols are locked together by two ribs on top of the barrel at the chamber end which engage two recesses in the underside of the slide. They are securely locked together during the moment of high chamber pressure and they travel rearward a short distance still firmly mated to each other. During recoil, the barrel swings backward on its link which is attached to the frame by the slide stop pin passing through it. As rearward travel continues, the barrel is forced downward and away from the slide. The barrel's rearward travel ceases when it strikes its stop in the frame, while the slide continues backward to complete extraction and ejection of the empty case before rebounding by means of the recoil spring to strip and chamber another round from the magazine.

These pistols carry an excellent manual thumb safety, a debatable grip safety and a half-cock notch. This mechanism prevents the pistol from going full-auto in case the sear fails. While half-cock can be relied on as a safety, it seems more a holdover from cavalry days.

Plagued by the threat of ever-increasing product liability lawsuits and pressed by those who oppose our second amendment rights, Colt's lawyers have forced another safety device on the Series 80 pistols. The addition of the so-called "firing pin lock" has caused the value of Series 70 Government Model pistols to almost double. Some pistolsmiths refuse to work on Series 80 Colts and others will do so only grudgingly. Why? The safety mechanism adds at least 8 ounces to the trigger pull weight and further increases the impression of drag during the let-off. Many have implied that trigger work attempted on this new system will have but fleeting effect. •

No matter how much we moan and groan, the Series 80 firing pin lock is here to stay. A hole inside the slide; on the right side, contains a spring-loaded firing pin block plunger which is held in place by a modified firing pin. Two levers have been added to the frame — a trigger bar lever attached to the sear pin and a plunger lever to the hammer pin. When the trigger is pulled the trigger bar lever rotates rearward and causes the plunger lever to rise against the firing pin block plunger, driving it up so the inertia firing pin can move forward through a notch in the plunger. When the trigger is released the plunger's spring pushes it down to once more block the firing pin. A worst-case scenario would be to place this mechanism in a stainless-steel pistol and ask someone to

improve the trigger. That's just what SOF did, realizing that if we sent it to the wrong meat market we might end up with an unregistered full-auto machine pistol.

Like it or not, stainless-steel firearms are a fact of life ("Waterproof Weaponry," SOF, September '85). They fill an important niche in the inventory of those who have need of their special qualities and are willing to accept the inevitable tradeoffs. The frames on all of Colt's stainless-steel handguns are high-ferrous forgings. Colt has addressed the problem of galling on the bearing surfaces of the reciprocating parts, originally a serious problem on all stainless-steel firearms due to the increased coefficient of friction, by differential heat treatment of these components.

A stainless-steel version of the .45 ACP Colt Officer's Model was chosen for our test and evaluation. It weighs 34 ounces, empty. The overall length is just 7¼ inches, with a height of 5½ inches and a width of 1⅞ inches.

In the right leather, it's very concealable.

With polished sides and a glass-beaded matte top surface, the slide forging has the enlarged ejection port frequently installed on customized .45 Colts. High-profile fixed sights are a vast improvement over the standard Government Model sight system. Both sights are carbon-steel black oxide dull blued from front to rear.

Three colored dots — two on the rear sight and one on the front — neither add nor detract while shooting under stress. Colored dots are cosmetic hype only . . . they fade away when you concentrate on placing a flash front sight picture onto a target. In this situation, no matter how much you practice on paper targets and pepper-poppers, when push comes to shove, the front sight will

**Belled at the muzzle, the Officer's Model looks like a very small blunderbuss. We're not sure why.**



### CHRONOGRAPH RESULTS: .45 ACP & .380 ACP AMMUNITION

**Instrumentation: Oehler Model 33 Chronotach with Skyscreen III detectors positioned 10 feet from muzzle. Ambient temperature, 63 degrees F. All readings in feet per second (fps). Pistols: Colt Officer's .45 ACP Model with 3.63-inch barrel and Colt Mustang .380 ACP Model with 2.73-inch barrel.**

.45 ACP Ammunition:	Low velocity	High velocity	Extreme spread	Average	Standard deviation
Reload: Cast					
230-gr. RN					
w/6.3 gr. Unique	720	778	58	751	18
G.I. ball					
WCC 71					
234-gr. FMJ	751	772	21	762	7
REM Targetmaster					
185-gr. WC	690	721	31	703	9
Winchester					
185-gr.					
Silvertip HP	856	892	36	880	11
<b>.380 ACP</b>					
<b>Ammunition:</b>					
Musgrave					
95-gr. FMJ	812	934	122	884	39
Philippine					
95-gr. FMJ	873	921	48	889	14
Frontier JHP	792	838	46	816	16
Winchester 85-gr.					
Silvertip HP	896	966	70	924	25

invariably be slightly above the rear sight. Sight radius is 5¼ inches.

A Commander-type hammer is standard. I don't like this, but its tendency to chew off chunks of your hand has been obviated by an excellent beavertail tang on the grip safety. A flat main-spring housing has been installed below the grip safety. Some may find the standard thumb safety difficult to employ when firing from the proper modified Weaver stance. If so, have an oversize safety fitted, but stay away from ambidextrous safeties unless you are left-handed; they have a nasty habit of snagging on your jacket resulting in condition zero — round in chamber with the safety off. And you can forget about the safety stop on the hammer. No doubt the expression "half-cocked" is derived from this archaic feature.

The magazine release button is exactly where it's been for three-quarters of a century, but the Officer's ACP Model magazine's capacity has been reduced to six. With a round in the chamber, that gives you seven rounds to do the job. You shouldn't need any more. Standard M1911A1 seven-round magazines can be used, but they will jut slightly below the frame.

Only 3.63 inches long, the six-groove barrel has a left-hand twist. Belled at the muzzle, it looks every bit like a very small blunderbuss. Its effect on the pistol's balance characteristics is, at most, slight.

On all short-slide Commander and Officer's ACP Colt pistols, the slide stop as it comes from the factory simply won't do for those whose lives depend on these firearms. During the slide's diminished rearward travel, the slide stop is likely to pop up into its notch and lock the slide rearward at a most inopportune moment — the "Commander Syndrome." The rear face of the slide stop must be dimpled just enough to positively engage the spring-loaded slide stop plunger, but not so much that the slide stop will fail to rotate up after the last shot has been fired. This should be done by a competent pistolsmith only.

Which brings us to the modifications made to our test specimen by an expert gunsmith in order to enhance the pistol's reliability and performance when the pucker factor arises. Usually, muzzle weights and compensators, extended slides and other gimmicks have no place on a self-defense gun. Nevertheless, certain modifications were necessary. John G. Lawson (The Sight Shop, Dept. SOF, 1802 East Columbia Ave., Tacoma, WA 98404), a gunsmith for 40 years with a specialty in pistolsmithing for the past 20 years, concentrated first on the trigger.

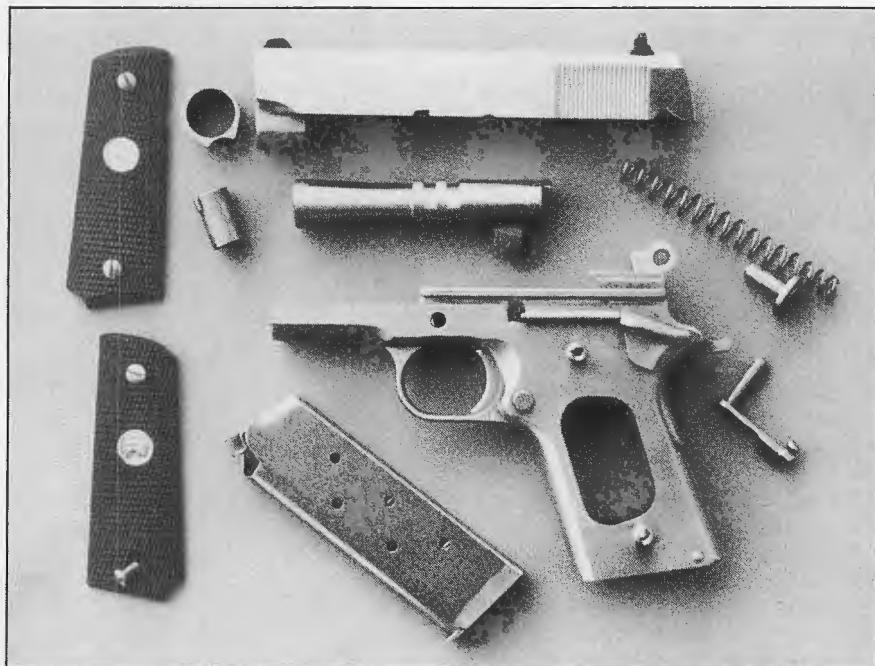
Obvious burrs were removed, but no surfaces were stoned to any measurable degree. This and the addition of over-travel and take-up screws to the stock trigger brought the pull weight down to a crisp and consistent 4.25 pounds. Officer's ACP front sights will sometimes blow off the slide after two or three boxes of ammunition. This component was restaked. Colt advises me they are attending to this prob-

lem. The feed ramp was polished and the barrel throated to accommodate bullets of all configurations. Both the plunger tube and grip screw bushings were staked to prevent their loosening under heavy usage. The extractor was shaped and polished. This is a normal procedure. Both the firing pin and double recoil spring were replaced by Wolff springs (W.C. Wolff Company, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 232, Ardmore, PA 19003) with a 22-pound load rating. The sear spring and disconnecter were inspected and hand fitted and, of course, the rear of the slide stop was dimpled. The Officer's ACP needs no more than this to prepare it for battle.

None of these modifications alter the disassembly procedures, which differ somewhat from the standard Government Model

Colt. Remove the magazine and clear the piece. Press down on the recoil spring plug and simultaneously rotate the barrel bushing counterclockwise about a quarter-turn. Withdraw the bushing. Using a screwdriver, push the recoil spring plug inward until its locking lug clears the notch in the slide. Turn the plug a half-turn to the right or left. Under control, allow the plug and recoil spring to extend out of the slide. Remove the plug. Cock the hammer and draw the slide to the rear until its disassembly notch is indexed to the lug on the slide stop. Withdraw the slide stop by pushing it from the right side of the slide. Pull the slide forward and off the frame. Lift up the recoil spring

Officer's ACP Model field-stripped.



## COLT MUSTANG SPECIFICATIONS

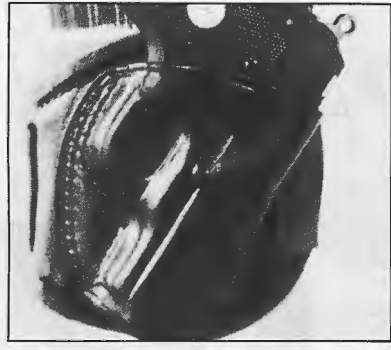
Caliber	.380 ACP (9mm Kurz)
Operation	Locked breech, short-recoil operated. Single locking lug on top barrel engages a recess in the slide. Exposed hammer. Single-action, semiautomatic only. Manual thumb safety, half-cock notch on hammer and firing pin lock operated by pivoting ejector.
Weight, empty	18.5 ounces
Length, overall	5.6 inches
Height	3.96 inches
Width (over grips)	1½ inches
Barrel	Six-groove with left-hand twist
Barrel length	2.73 inches
Grip panels	Black plastic
Sights	Fixed-blade ramped front; square-notch rear. Sight radius: 3.93 inches.
Finish	Black oxide
Magazine	Single-line box type with five-round capacity. Spare magazines, \$10.70.
Price	\$340.50
Manufacturer	Colt Industries, Firearms Division, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 1868, Hartford, CT 06101.

## HIDEABLE HOLSTERS

Professionals don't pack their pieces in dime-store leather. Kenneth L. Null (Dept. SOF, 678 Green Spring Road, Hanover, PA 17331) creates bench-crafted concealment holsters of the highest quality for those who carry and use handguns as daily routine. All of his scabbards are carefully cut and patiently hand-molded around real guns.

Ken has less than two dozen designs and none are intended for rhinestone cowboys. For our Mustang we chose his Model ANK, an ankle holster which does not depend on snaps or straps for retention of the pistol. His holsters are tight-fitting when new and require at least 20 or more practice draws for break-in. This ankle holster uses a dense felt backing to prevent movement during wear and withdrawal of the pistol, and dissipates perspiration, often encountered on ankle holsters with fleece backing. The Model ANK holster costs \$63.95.

I am very much inclined to crossdraw holsters with a pronounced muzzle forward rake. It was with some trepidation that I accepted Null's suggestion to



Null's ankle holster for the Colt Mustang.

Null's GSS/XDR crossdraw rig shown with the Officer's ACP Model.



purchase his revolutionary new GSS/XDR designed with a decided muzzle rearward rake to hold the pistol's butt close to the body. Great for concealment, but how could you draw the pistol out of such a configuration? The secret lies in that portion of the holster behind the pistol's slide. It's completely open, except for the stitching around the belt loops. To draw, just grab the pistol, pivot the butt forward and withdraw with speed. Cost is \$69.95.

Waist scabbards must be fitted to belts of the exact width as the holster's loops. I cannot stress this enough. For body-hugging concealed carry and precision draws under stress the belt must be wide (1½ inches is ideal), stiff and thick. Null's Model CBT 1½-inch belt meets all the requirements. Constructed with a full-face lining of dense high-quality leather, laminated, and lock-stitched with durable nylon thread, the CBT creates a sturdy belt with minimum lateral flex. Cost is \$69.95 with a solid silicone brass buckle.

Colt's new pistols in .45 and .380 are compact hideables any professional can rely on. In the right holsters they are sure to remain unseen.

and guide and remove them from the rear. Rotate the link forward and pull the barrel out of the front of the slide.

I suggest you lubricate this with some of John Lawson's magic potion, 1-4-SS. The sear and disconnector should be lubricated with STP to which has been added a small amount of Lawson's lubricant. Reassemble in the reverse order. Make sure the plunger lever that controls the firing pin lock is

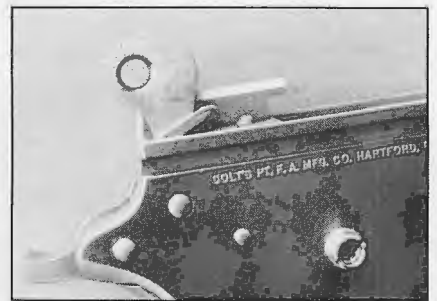
down before attempting to assemble the slide to the frame. Install the recoil spring plug and rotate it into its notch in the slide before you replace the barrel bushing.

More than 1,000 rounds of four different types of .45 ACP ammunition were fired through the Officer's ACP. The modified Colt performed in an exemplary manner with no stoppages of any kind. Each load was photographed to ascertain how much velocity is



The bushing and blunderbuss barrel of the Officer's Model.

Plunger lever directly to right of hammer which operates the firing pin lock of the Officer's Model.



lost by the stubby 3.63-inch barrel. GI ball was used for control (headstamp: WCC 71). Its average velocity was 762 fps. Reloads consisting of medium-hardcast 230-grain roundnose bullets, assorted cases, CCI Large Pistol primers and 6.3 grains of Unique shuffled downrange at an average speed of 751 fps. Remington Targetmaster ammunition with 185-gr. wadcutter bullets defy feeding

Continued on page 95

## COLT OFFICER'S ACP MODEL SPECIFICATIONS

Caliber	.....	.45 ACP
Operation	.....	Locked breech, short-recoil operated. Two locking lugs on top of barrel engage recesses in the slide. Exposed hammer. Single-action, semiautomatic only. Manual thumb safety, grip safety, half-cock notch on hammer and firing pin lock operated by two levers in frame.
Weight, empty	.....	34 ounces
Length, overall	.....	7.25 inches
Height	.....	5.5 inches
Width (over grips)	.....	1½ inches
Barrel	.....	Six-groove with left-hand twist
Barrel length	.....	3.63 inches
Grip panels	.....	Black-painted wood
Sights	.....	High profile; fixed; black oxide front and rear. Front sight with single white dot. Square-notch rear with two white dots; rounded corners. Sight radius, 5.25 inches.
Finish	.....	Stainless steel
Magazine	.....	Single-line box type with six-round capacity. Spare stainless-steel magazines \$18. Will accept standard seven-round M1911A1 magazines.
Price	.....	\$569.95
Manufacturer	.....	Colt Industries, Firearms Division, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 1868, Hartford, CT 06101.



# RICE PADDY

## Jumping with the Divine Dragons **DZ**

Text & Photos by Mick Doyle

I looked down for a DZ.

Nothing. As far as the eye could see there stretched a green patchwork of rice paddies, sugar cane fields and the occasional glint of a fish farm pond. All this made for spectacular scenery, but its beauty was lost on me as I craned my neck in an effort to find that drop zone.

It gave me a lonely feeling watching the C-119 "Flying Boxcar" that had just disgorged its load of soldiers turn into a speck on the horizon. As I dangled like a wind chime the loneliness was magnified by the realization that the DZ was nowhere to be seen. All I remember thinking was that I must have been dropped miles off course.

But there it was. In the distance I could just make out colored smoke drifting across the paddies below. I pulled down on the back right risers and took a look around. I still couldn't see it, but the smoke was there, holding out at least a ray of hope that this jump wasn't going to end in disaster.

Two hundred feet off the ground. I could hear garbled Chinese voices coming over the bullhorn on the ground — presumably the commands were the usual "Get your feet and knees together, clown," type of stuff.

There was still only water, mud and rice

seedlings for miles around, but it was time to assume the position as the ground rushed at my dangling feet. "I'm going to buy the farm, the bloody rice farm," went through my head over and over.

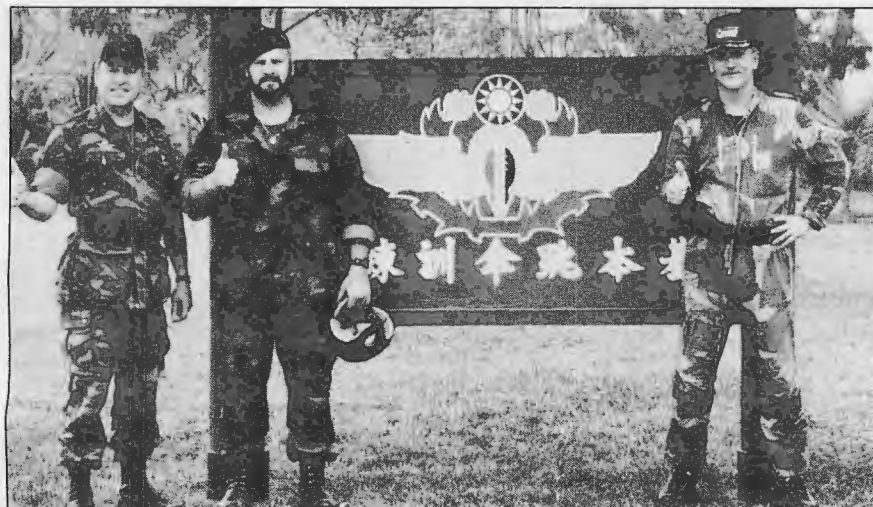
SOF Publisher Robert K. Brown was in the same predicament. Off to my left I heard him bellow, "A rice paddy, I'm going to land in a goddamned rice paddy."

How true. But he wasn't alone — we were all going into the mire. No time for such trifling matters, though. The ground flew at me in a kaleidoscope of green seedlings, gray mud and shimmering water. Waiting . . . waiting . . . slurp.

Not *thud*. *Slurp*. My boots disappeared in the gray-brown ooze of the flooded field and I sprawled face down in the slime — a most undignified position. But the hard part was still to come.

Staggering to my feet in the shifting slime I fought my way through the wet and muddy tangle of silk and parachute cord. It is far from an easy task to manipulate that maze of cord and silk into any kind of movable package, but the chore gets real tough when you

**Mike Epstein (left), John Donovan and Robert K. Brown (right) after successfully completing the ROC/IAAV jump.**



have to defend yourself against assault.

As I fumbled with shroud and lines an angry old woman chattering in Chinese wagged a crooked finger at me and threatened to beat my brains out with the handle of a hoe. Fortunately for ROC/Australian relations, the ancient woman muttered a few more oaths and then set to straightening the rice seedlings.

Not being one to turn my blind side to anyone who had just ambushed me, I moved out of the beaten zone and toward the road with my dripping parachute. Not until I reached terra firma in the form of a dirt road did I take my eyes off *mama-san*.

One of the Chinese soldiers who had helped organize the jump met me on the road. "Where's the DZ?" I was still convinced that we were miles off course. He spread his hands toward the paddies all around us. "This is it. This DZ is always a soft landing." He laughed. "But watch out for the fish farms. Those ponds are full of eels and they have been known to bite."

By the time we reached the assembly area, the C-119 that had dropped us static liners had climbed to altitude and put out a load of free-fallers — The Divine Dragons. This elite ROC parachute team was putting on a show just for us round eyes. They stacked their chutes, one atop the other like a colored silk wedding cake, darted around in the sky with their maneuverable parafoils and executed a precision landing on one of the few dry patches in the area. It was quite a show.

The jump was over and now it was time for our reward. Foreign jumpers formed up in front of the Chiang Kai-shek monument that dominates the parade ground at Ping Tung. The deputy commander of the Airborne and Special Warfare Center, Major General Chang, pinned the wings on our chests and handed out certificates.

Our jump trip to Taiwan was not a trip designed only for those having highly placed contacts in the ROC government. Any member of the International Association of Airborne Veterans (IAAV) can travel to Taiwan and make the jump. During the week of 11-18 November the IAAV will be sponsoring a jump for qualified jumpers who want to experience the excitement of jumping with a group of airborne soldiers from Taiwan. The trip will cost \$1,759 and includes round-trip airfare from Los Angeles to Taipei, ground transportation and accommodations. Jump wings and certificates will be awarded after the jump and everyone will have the opportunity to do a little sightseeing afterward. But if you're interested, be quick about signing up — the jump is limited to 100 qualified parachutists.

Send all inquiries to: International Association of Airborne Veterans, Suite 181, 606 Barry St., Chicago, IL 60657. Please include a self-addressed, stamped long envelope. ✕

**RIGHT:** In the door: Robert K. Brown gets ready for a flight to the DZ in a C-119.

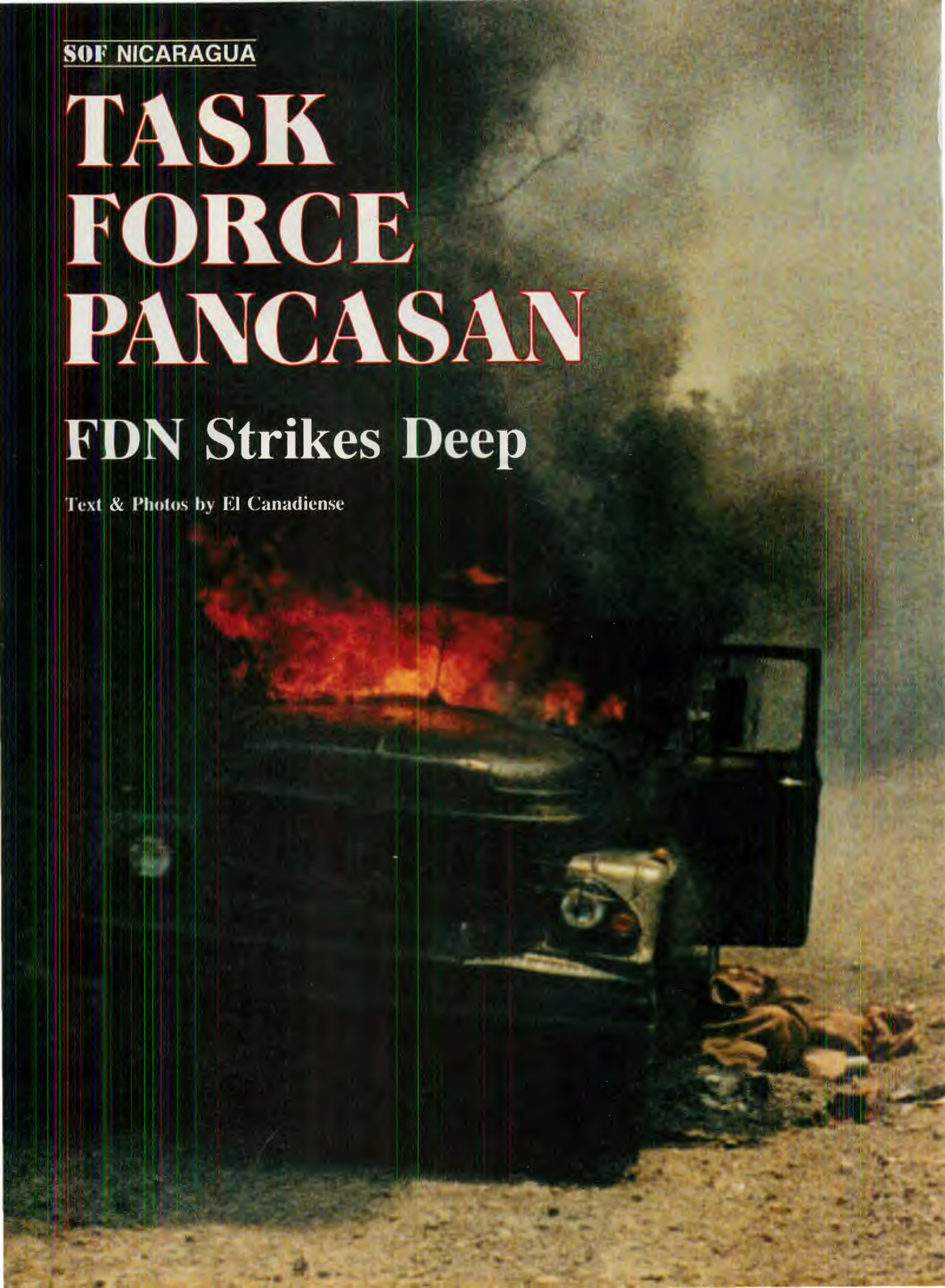


**SOF NICARAGUA**

# **TASK FORCE PANCASAN**

## **FDN Strikes Deep**

Text & Photos by El Canadiense



**T**ASK Force Pancasan was forging slowly south through the rolling hills of Boaco and Chontales, ambushing military convoys and sacking Sandinista Army outposts as it advanced toward the strategic Managua-Rama highway, barely 65 miles from the Costa Rican border. Behind us lay the wreckage of three communist-style collective farms, a half-dozen army trucks and a similar number of small Sandinista garrisons. All had the misfortune to be in the path of what was modestly described as a reconnaissance patrol.

It was late spring and the Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN) was still growing. Volunteers were streaming northward to FDN base camps on the Nicaragua-Honduras border. As always, providing new recruits with weapons and supplies was a constant problem. Total FDN troop strength was estimated at 17,000, with 6,000 enrolled in our task force's parent command, Regional Command Jorge Salazar.

Largest of all the FDN's regional commands, the Jorge Salazar operates out of a controlled zone of about 300 square miles, situated between Mount Musun in eastern Matagalpa and the Waslala highway in western Zelaya. Based on what I saw in this area, the FDN enjoys strong support among the *campesinos*. But then most of the FDN's troops, whose average age is about 20, grew up in this poor farming region. The peasants look after their own with a desperate devotion tested by six years of Marxist oppression. Thus they provide the FDN with food, shelter and a vast network of *correos* — messengers-cum-guides who act as the eyes and ears for the freedom fighters. Only in this way can these troops remain deep in Nicaragua for up to two years at a time.

This continuing internal logistical support network, which also serves as a fertile recruiting ground, has enabled the FDN to expand its AO. So operational task forces like the one I was accompanying have been able to move farther west and south inside Nicaragua than ever before.

Task Force Pancasan was dispatched with orders to test the terrain all the way down to southern Chontales in hopes of establishing a permanent presence there.

## CANADIAN CONTRA

*El Canadiense* is the nom de guerre of a 39-year-old Canadian free-lance writer. Although his family has served in the British military, he is a lifelong civilian who is expanding his talents into broadcasting. On his return from Central America, he visited Washington to share his firsthand insights into the true nature of Nicaragua's civil war with key congressmen and plain citizens.



**TOP:** Task Force Pancasan comes under enemy fire in Matagalpa.

**ABOVE:** Dumas (3rd from left) with some of his men.

**BELOW:** El Canadiense and Dumas on the Espabel bridge.



Besides probing the Sandinistas' defenses, TF Pancasan was to gather intelligence on what to expect in the way of support from local *campesinos* who had never had contact with the FDN. This was always an open question in new areas because of constant Sandinista propaganda portraying FDN troops as sadistic marauders who find pleasure in rape, murder and pillage.

Because they have had little or no contact with the FDN, the people of Chontaleños know very little about the freedom fighters except for the lies they hear from the Sandinista government. What they *do* know about firsthand are collective farms, chronic shortages of basic goods — even the simplest commodities they produce themselves — and watching press gangs hunt their young for service in the Sandinista military.

As I traveled for several weeks with Task Force Pancasan from north to south two-thirds of the way through Nicaragua, the reaction of *campesinos* unfamiliar



with the FDN usually was one of guarded pleasure. This often turned to genuine welcome soon after our arrival as they recognized the youth of the freedom fighters — obviously too young to have been in Somoza's hated National Guard — and realized these dedicated soldiers had been poor farmers like themselves.

The occasional Sandinista prisoner we captured along the way also expressed surprise. Twenty-two-year-old Ariel Torres of the *Compañía de Seguridad y Servicio* was typical: "They [the Sandinistas] told me you would put my eyes out and torture me. They said you were the Guardia, mercenaries, rich people trying to get your property back. I was amazed when the lads stopped me and I saw who they were!"

Torres now is a newly recruited freedom fighter.

The rainy season was closing in as Task Force Pancasan reached the Rama highway, one of the few paved roads in eastern Nicaragua. The strategically important artery connects Managua with Bluefields, the major port on the Atlantic Coast. Breaking this link would isolate the vital coastal facility from the capital.

**TOP:** Dumas (right) and his XO Vicente watch as State Farm 'Jorge Vogel' burns in Boaco. At bottom left are the possessions of the farm employees, left to fend for themselves.

**ABOVE:** Dumas' lieutenant, Comandante Chacal, inspects the scene after the ambushing of three army trucks on the Boaco-to-Sante Fe road. In the background is the second truck. Dead Sandinistas have had their boots removed — all recoverable military gear is stripped from enemy corpses.

It was assumed that any bridges on the highway between Managua and Rama would be heavily defended, despite reports by the ubiquitous *correos* that the spans were unguarded.

To our surprise, however, we learned that the intelligence passed to Comandante Dumas, 35, a former Evangelical deacon, was correct. Dumas, CO of TF Pancasan, divided his 350 men into four columns and deployed them to occupy four villages strung out along the highway: La Batea, La Gorra, El Cacao and Espabel.

These objectives were secured with only minor difficulty, and that was due to

carelessness on our part. In El Cacao, some of the FDN troops were ravenous, as usual, and imprudently crowded together around a bakery before searching adjacent houses. Unfortunately, some Sandinista militia members had hastily hidden in a house just across the square as the FDN patrol moved into the village. The easy target proved too tempting. Five freedom fighters and a civilian woman fell dead as a hail of bullets rained on the bakery.

The anti-Sandinista troops quickly counterattacked. The house was zapped with an RPG-7 rocket, killing the ambushers.

The small pocket of holdouts proved the exception. Elsewhere, members of the communist militia either surrendered or fled. One regular army captive in Espabel provided surprising intelligence. Zacarías Mendoza of the Sandinista army's 2521st Battalion told Comandante Dumas that his S-2 shop knew three days in advance of our approach. Yet Sandinista commanders in Muelle de los Bueyes sent only a handful of untrained conscripts to each village.

Mendoza became another eager recruit for the FDN. He described how he and 14 other would-be defenders of Espabel camped out near the village for three days and two nights. He and others were so fearful of armed confrontation that the unit leader instructed the men to empty their magazines into the air on our arrival and try to escape. Not that his leader was a coward, Mendoza insisted. He said they were merely following the orders given by Second Lieutenant Juan Sánchez before departing Muelle de los Bueyes: "*Si son muchos, corranse!*" (If they are many, run!)

Strangely inadequate defensive advice, especially for a 100,000-man army. But it fit the pattern of this whole expedition. On our way down from Matagalpa, we had been left alone by the Sandinistas, despite the provocative trail of destruction in our wake.

But Comandante Dumas acted as if nothing were unusual. His explanation sounded simplistic, maybe dangerously optimistic. "They don't want to fight," he said with a broad grin. "They're completely demoralized."

Yet some stories we heard indicated there was some truth in this. Several of those who joined us along the way told of massive desertions from the EPS (Sandinista army) and the militia, caused by a combination of harsh conditions, heavy casualties, frequent nonpayment of wages and refusal of leave to visit families.

Yeibin Bermúdez, who deserted to the FDN from the Sandinistas' 2523rd Battalion in Chontales in May, said conscripts were "promised 4,000 córdobas a month and a monthly pass." At the official exchange rate of the Managua government, which is highly

inflated, this works out to just over \$100 a month. At the more realistic black-market exchange rate, their pay is equivalent to \$50 or less a month.

The distinction proved to be academic for the Sandinista draftees, however. "In two months they never paid me," Yeibin said. "And they didn't let me off the base." And many draftees don't stay long enough to figure out the difference. Of his 98-member induction class, over 30 deserted within two days, he said.

A similar story was told by FDN recruit Roberto Ramos. He and 60 comrades deserted en masse from the 3623rd Battalion in Zelaya one night in February. At next morning's muster, the remaining officers had not a single trooper left to command.

The unpopularity and resentment of the intensive, often brutal forced recruitment by the Sandinistas seems widespread in rural areas. It certainly is a boon to the FDN's recruiting efforts. I conducted a straw poll of a 100-man FDN column. Seventy told me they joined the anti-Sandinista rebel movement in order to avoid the communist draft.

The occupation of the four hamlets ended on a light note, as Dumas briefly turned his attention from the routine military tasks to the equally vital *concientización*, or propaganda work. The Managua-to-Rama bus had been held up in Espabel by the arrival of TF Pancasan. The apprehensive but bemused passengers were herded together to hear an impromptu discourse on Nicaraguan political history, delivered with gusto by Jorvins, Dumas' articulate radio operator.

Once they realized that they were not about to be shot, the audience appeared interested. Jorvins finally ran out of bad things to say about the Sandinista government. Recognizing me as a journalist, several bus passengers came up to me with their own litany of complaints.

The most frequently mentioned is the pervasive shortage or complete lack of basic goods such as sugar and coffee. They told of farmers growing huge bean crops, only to have their entire harvest confiscated by the government officials, who issued ration cards to draw beans from government-controlled storehouses. When the farm families attempted to exchange these ration cards for beans, they were told they'd have to wait. The beans had been shipped off to feed the hungry hordes in the cities.

And even the most poorly educated Nicaraguan doesn't need an economics degree to understand that practically their entire sugar and coffee crops go to the Soviet Union to buy guns. This causes further resentment.

Finally, as darkness and a light drizzle fell softly on Espabel, TF Pancasan moved out, melting back into the hills, its mission completed.

The two-week return trip north to



**TOP:** The Managua-to-Rama bus, detained in Espabel.

**ABOVE:** Jorvins harangues the bus passengers.

**BELOW:** Dumas and his lieutenant, Comandante Miguel, in Espabel.



Matagalpa saw no serious attempt at pursuit, just a brief appearance by four government Cessna 337 Push-pulls making lazy circles overhead. Then there was the occasional report brought in by *correos* of an EPS battalion here, a militia column there.

The most interesting intel was a report about an 80-man EPS patrol that had been following us northward from the Managua-Rama highway. Apparently their RPG-7 gunner was trudging along with the launcher loaded. An accidental discharge resulted in the rather messy demise of the unit commander. The *correo* displayed unmistakable glee when he concluded his report with the news that the patrol was last seen heading back south, the RPG-7 gunner disarmed and in handcuffs.

As we continued toward the Nicaragua-Honduras border, still in western Zelaya, the *correos* brought Dumas a request for negotiations from a small independent armed resistance group operating in the area. They were anxious to unite with the FDN.

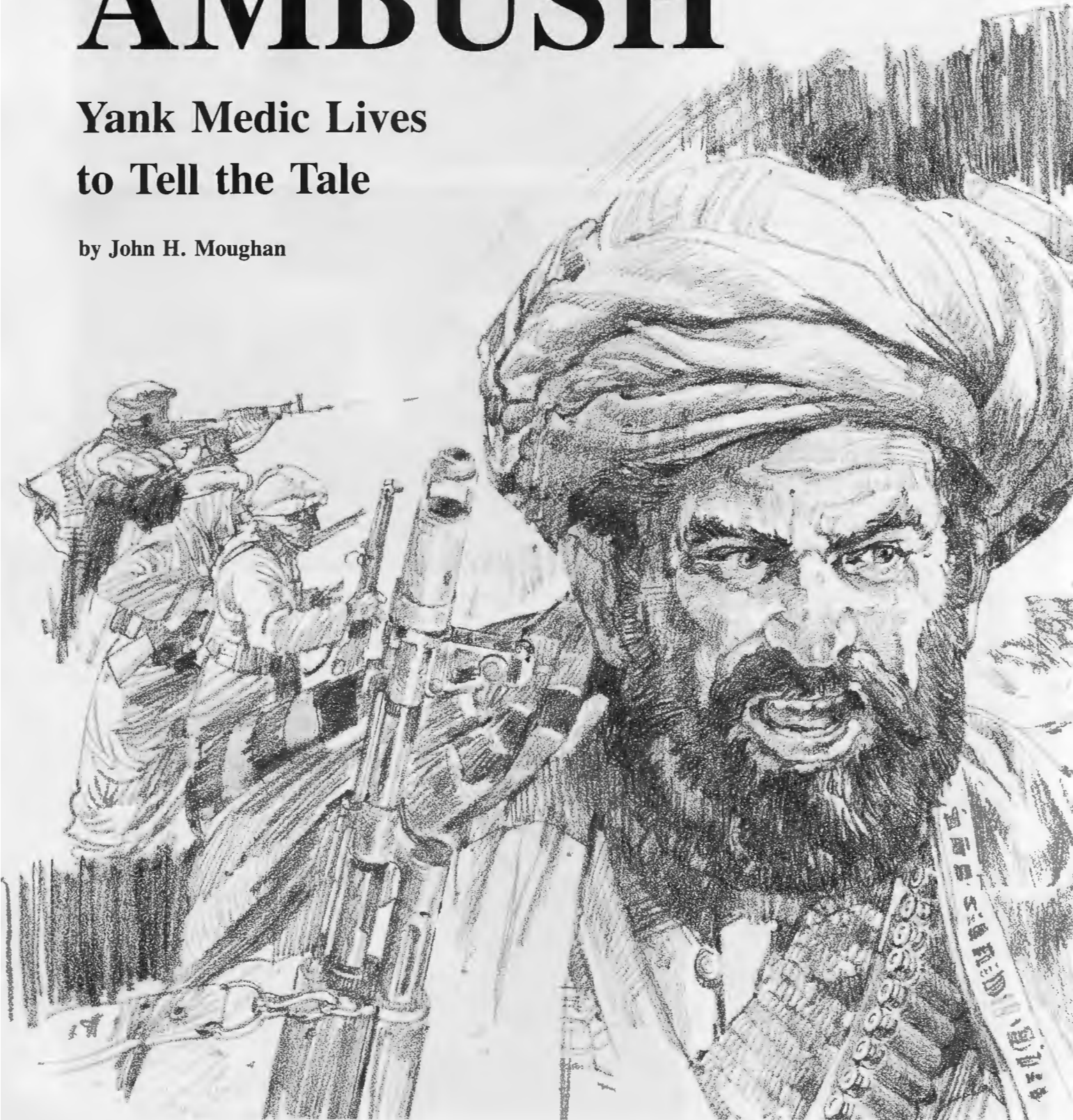
*Continued on page 108*

**SOF AFGHANISTAN**

# AFGHAN AMBUSH

**Yank Medic Lives  
to Tell the Tale**

by John H. Moughan





BILL DWYER

*In August 1985, John Moughan traveled to Afghanistan as part of a medical team sponsored by the Portland, Oregon-based Committee for a Free Afghanistan (CFA). His journey began months earlier when he answered an ad in a Washington, D.C., newspaper, placed by the International Medical Corps (IMC) which sought medical personnel who would be willing to travel into war-torn Afghanistan.*

*Moughan's application was accepted. Just before his departure, however, the State Department intervened. They were willing to give the IMC a grant to establish medical facilities in Pakistan — with the proviso that no more teams would be sent into Afghanistan. By this time, Moughan and the two newsmen — a reporter and a photographer — from the Arizona Republic who would accompany him had already made the necessary CFA and mujahideen connections to get in-country.*

— The Editors

**I** was in Afghanistan as part of a medical team to provide health care in the mujahideen-controlled, non-Soviet areas around

Kandahar. We spent a few weeks in Pakistan preparing the mission, and several additional weeks of disjointed travel through Afghanistan setting up and working clinics in the meager villages along the way. When we reached the Kandahar area we surveyed the possibilities of a permanent site, but as usual the Afghans' prior planning was both chaotic and grandiose. After a month of patching a clinic together I was ready to rotate out, and since the two American journalists had to leave to meet deadlines, I decided to accompany them.

Around 1700 on 19 September, the three of us along with 15 mujahideen crammed into the cargo area of our ride out — a Dodge four-wheel drive — in the typical "load it till it screams" Afghan method of transportation. With assorted AK barrels and magazines, and Afghan elbows and knees jammed into

*Continued on page 92*

### MUJIS' MEDIC

John Moughan told SOF he went into Afghanistan to help the mujahideen "fight those bastards, and to see if I could still cut it." He came through on both counts.

His last encounter with war was in Vietnam where he served as a Marine platoon and company commander in 1969-70. He's since risen to the rank of major in the Marine Corps Reserve, received his master's degree in international affairs, trained as an emergency medical technician, and presently works as a registered nurse in Florida.



# BULLETS & BEANS



## **Gs Down and Out in Guatemala**

**Text & Photos  
by Steve Salisbury**

**“W**E do what we can with what we have” is the slogan of the Guatemalan armed forces. And while they may not have much, it appears to have been enough to reduce the simmering communist insurrection from a serious threat in the early 1980s to little more than a nuisance today. This stands as a remarkable achievement by itself, but it’s even more startling considering that the Guatemalan armed forces have done it all virtually alone: No military aid came from the United States nor any other government.

The principal factors for the Guatemalan army’s success are standard military fare — solid intelligence, exquisite operations planning, aggressive patrolling, hot pursuit of the enemy upon contact, bold special operations, smart psyops, continuous civic action and, most important, active popular support effectively mobilized into civil defense.

**Although the guerrillas are not as strong now as during the early 1980s, Guatemalan soldiers still encounter them in the rough country in the north.**

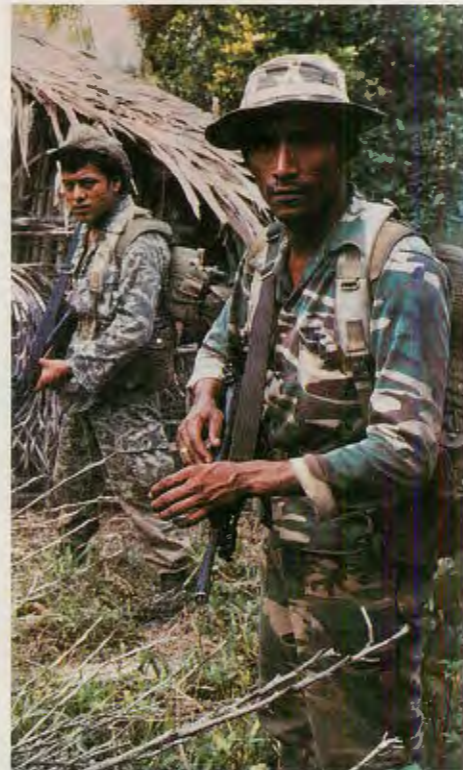


**T**HE Guatemalan military has honed its counterinsurgency skills during years of experience, quelling a number of rebellions since the early 1960s. But the army's no-nonsense approach to fighting communism has drawn criticism from many American politicians and human rights activists. In 1977, President Jimmy Carter, who made a one-sided vision of human rights the governing principle of his foreign policy, cut all American military assistance to Guatemala when it failed to meet his standards for an acceptable human rights program.

**LEFT: Guatemalan trooper pauses during a patrol in northern Guatemala.**

**BELOW: Guatemalan marines patrol the Passion River near the Mexican border.**

**BOTTOM: Guatemalan troops pause in a village during a routine patrol.**







**A**FTER 1977 the Guatemalan government turned to other arms suppliers to fill the American void. Since the early 1970s Guatemala has purchased military hardware from Israel (Galil assault rifles, UZI submachine guns, AP-30 rifle-launched grenades, Soltam 60mm commando mortars, RBY-MK1 armored vehicles and Dabur patrol boats); Belgium (FN MAG machine guns); Taiwan (57mm recoilless rifles); Portugal (88mm recoilless rifles); Italy (Beretta submachine guns); Yugoslavia (105mm howitzers); and Spain (60mm HE mortar rounds). American arms delivered before 1977 still fill Guatemalan arsenals — M1 Carbines and Garands, M79 grenade launchers, 60mm and 81mm mortars, .50-caliber machine guns, 3.5-inch bazookas and M113 armored personnel carriers.

The Guatemalan armed forces also took steps toward greater material self-sufficiency after the cutoff of U.S. military aid. Today they manufacture their own small-arms ammunition, armored vehicles, uniforms, knapsacks, web gear and boots.

**LEFT: Guatemalan officer fires an M79 at guerrillas during a brief firefight in Petén Province.**

**BELOW: Troopies look unconcerned about the guerrilla threat as they cross a jungle stream.**

**BOTTOM: Guatemalan civil defense in Petén Province: the best-armed carry old Mauser bolt-action rifles.**



**T**HE loss of military support from Washington was more an inconvenience than a serious problem. During the 1960s and 1970s Marxist guerrillas in Guatemala were generally ill-armed and poorly organized. That changed in the early 1980s, though. At the beginning of this decade the Guatemalan military had to pull out all the stops to stave off a serious communist push for power.

In 1981, according to Guatemalan military sources, as many as 6,000 guerrillas, inspired and armed by Fidel Castro and his Sandinista cronies, roamed this mountainous jungle country. The guerrillas frequently threatened Guatemala City, engaging in shootouts with government troops within the country's capital city.

**RIGHT:** Fallen trees are often the only way for soldiers to cross deep rivers.

**BELOW:** Government troops enjoy a good rapport with campesinos in Petén.

**BOTTOM:** In jungle-choked Petén Province, rivers often make the best roads.



**G**UATEMALAN soldiers often found themselves facing an enemy ironically armed with American M16s, AR-15s, M60s and M79s, many of which had serial numbers indicating capture by communist forces in the Vietnam War. But despite being hampered by severe shortages of trucks, ammunition, communications equipment and helicopters (Guatemalan air force officers told me that they have only three UH-1 Hueys currently functioning due to an embargo on spare parts imposed by the United States), the Guatemalan army — which has grown from 25,000 men in 1981 to 40,000 today — has fought tenaciously and effectively. Government infantrymen prowl the jungle and scale volcanoes chasing the Gs in their own back yard.

The modest Guatemalan air force has helped make life tough for the Gs with Swiss-made PC-7 trainer prop-planes outfitted with 2.75-inch HE rockets, Israeli-made Arava transport planes converted into makeshift gunships, American-made A-37 Dragonfly jet bombers and a handful of Hueys mounted with MAGs and M60Ds. But the situation became so serious in the early 1980s that civilian pilots were called upon to fly their light aircraft on combat sorties.

"We would fire Galils and drop grenades out the door," recalled a pilot who is a member of Guatemala's air reserve.

Guatemala's counterinsurgency battle was tilted in favor of the government during the early 1980s by Guatemala's military intelligence. In 1980, Guatemala's four guerrilla factions — the Rebel Armed Forces (FAR), the Armed People's Revolutionary Organization (ORPA), the Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP) and the Guatemalan Worker's Party (PGT) — quit squabbling and joined together in the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union (URNG). Guatemalan intelligence reported that Fidel Castro had demanded their unification as a condition for increased arms shipments. The URNG was preparing a nationwide offensive on the scale of the failed "Final Offensive" of their Marxist brothers-in-arms in neighboring El Salvador who had come uncomfortably close to seizing power in January of that year.

**Routine patrols sometimes turn to tragedy when troops run into mines. This Guatemalan officer is cared for by his men as he awaits a medevac.**



**H**OWEVER, unlike in El Salvador, the Guatemalan security forces were tipped off about guerrilla plans by a well-handled network of informants. Using leads, hunches, tough interrogation and informed deduction, the security forces discovered and destroyed dozens of rebel safe houses, explosives factories and clinics in the capital as well as in other major cities, according to Guatemalan intelligence sources. Large caches of guerrilla weapons, medicines, radios, web gear and other military equipment were captured after bloody rebel resistance.

**Galil-toting trooper leads his squad through the jungle as they near the end of a patrol.**



## GUERRILLA RUNAROUND

Guatemala's vast northern department of Petén is a tourist's paradise. It has beautiful lakes, exotic wildlife and virgin jungle, and the ruins of the most spectacular city of the long-lost empire of the Maya at Tikal. However, life for the peasants who live there isn't always so placid; the communist guerrillas see to that.

"Four years ago in El Josefino the subversives killed my cousin Juan Carlos and another man in front of the whole village," said Mariano Calderón last 8 December at the military detachment in El Subín. "They shot them publicly and dumped their bodies along the road like animals because my cousin and the other man did not want communism. The subversives made an example of them. The people were silent with fear. If they protested, they might have been killed, too."

The guerrillas make no bones about killing campesinos. On 1 August 1984 Guatemalan marines operating near the Usumacinta River, which forms part of the Mexican border, captured guerrilla leaflets that stated: GUERRILLA ORDER: BEGINNING THIS DATE IT IS PROHIBITED TO ENTER THE JUNGLE TO PICK SHATE [a leaf used for perfume and decoration],

FORAGE OR ANY OTHER ACTIVITY. THE CIVILIANS WHO ARE FOUND IN IT WILL BE EXECUTED IMMEDIATELY. EVERY CIVILIAN IN THE JUNGLE WILL BE CONSIDERED AN ENEMY OF OUR PEOPLE AND COLLABORATOR OF THE ARMY DEFENDER OF THE BIG RICH REPRESSIVE NATIONALS AND FOREIGNERS. REBEL ARMED FORCES — F.A.R. — Petén 26 July 1985.

The guerrillas have turned to issuing death threats to counter the campesinos' collaboration with the army.

"The subversives came one time in June while we were clearing our cornfield and wanted us to drop our machetes and join them," said a light-skinned, wispy-bearded campesino at an agricultural cooperative in the Petén village of Mario Mendez. "We said that we couldn't and they got very angry. They scolded us. They said that they had two casualties because the civilians are telling the army where they are. One shouted, 'Because of the civilians we are losing this war.' Of course. We don't want those *hijos de puta*. We want to work and the army protects us so that we can."

The list of guerrilla atrocities in Guatemala is long but rarely reported by international news organizations. Stories of government human rights violations have abounded in the West-

ern media. The Guatemalan military insists it is the victim of a communist disinformation campaign that blames guerrilla barbarities on the army.

One recent incident that gives credence to the army's case occurred last 25 May in the remote village of El Tumbo on the sleepy banks of the Pasión River in the jungle of western Petén. On that stormy night guerrillas forced about half of El Tumbo's 200 or so inhabitants to begin a march of several days through inhospitable jungle and violent rainstorms to Mexico where international relief workers and Mexican authorities accepted them as refugees fleeing government persecution in their homeland.

Today, El Tumbo is a ghost village of decaying bamboo huts being swallowed by the jungle overgrowth. The remainder of its inhabitants — those who hid from the guerrillas — have moved several clicks downstream to a larger village called Canaan where they believe they will have more security.

On the morning of 7 December 1985, some two dozen former inhabitants of El Tumbo gathered in front of a squalid wooden shack in Canaan and told of that stormy night last May when the guerrillas split up their families for the long march. I have changed their names, honoring their wishes for anonymity to protect them and their families from reprisals.

**S**AID a high-ranking officer who commanded many of the anti-terrorist operations in Guatemala City: "In 1981, from June to August or September, we detected and destroyed 45 terrorist safe houses in Guatemala City. Almost all were located in the more luxurious zones which shows you how the communists lie when they talk of fighting for the poor. In one house, a Belgian priest was killed with the terrorists while he was firing an M16 at our units. In another, the terrorists killed an American representative of the Ginsa tire factory whom they were holding for ransom for \$10 million as we tried to rescue him. We captured piles of weapons, enough to arm at least 1,500 terrorists — 75mm recoilless

*Continued on page 100*

**ABOVE RIGHT: Troopers negotiate the rugged terrain of Guatemala's back country day after day.**

**RIGHT: Troops fire an Israeli-made 60mm mortar at guerrilla troops.**



"It was something sad for our village," said Ricardo Fernandez, the lanky commissioner of El Tumbo. "The guerrillas demanded that the people abandon the village and join them. But who wanted to leave their warm homes when it was raining hard? The guerrillas said the army was coming to massacre everyone. But it was a big lie to frighten the people to go with them. Why am I going to believe that the army is going to kill us if we didn't do anything? The army was in El Tumbo a week before and it treated us very well. But what could the people do? They had no weapons to defend themselves. They had to obey."

"Women and children and old people were taken on a terrible walk of a week through the jungle to Mexico," continued Commissioner Fernandez. "Even pregnant women were taken. The young men were forced to go to guerrilla encampments in Guatemala to become combatants. They think that the army killed those who stayed because the guerrillas tell them this lie. I talked to a woman who saw the people of El Tumbo in Mexico and she said that they asked her if some of us were still alive."

According to the old campesino's tabulations, the Gs took 109 of El Tumbo's 209 villagers. Only three are known to have escaped. Pepe Prieto was one.

"I didn't want to go, but they took me by force," said the skinny 16-year-old boy. "They also took my grandparents and aunt. It was very sad. They forced us to say goodbye the next day. We were crying. They took my grandparents and aunt to Mexico. They sent me to their encampments with 25 other boys and men because we were of fighting age. There were a lot of guerrillas, about 200. They trained us how to use weapons and crawl. But we did not want to be guerrillas. We wanted to go home. But the guerrillas would threaten us, saying, 'He who goes, we kill him.'"

Pepe suffered guerrilla intimidation, miserable jungle living and bad diet for 23 days before escaping.

Another young man, Felipe, continued the story: "They took us by pure deception. They said, 'Let's go. We'll save your life because the army is coming to kill those who stay.' They said that the army discovered their encampments nearby and that because there were some of their collaborators in the population, the whole village had to pay. I couldn't believe it. The army treated us well just a few days earlier. The guerrillas gave the people fear and deceived us. They promised us a better life in Mexico. What barbarity! The women, children and old men they took there are now in refugee camps without hope. And we 28 men

who were not very old or very young were taken to waste away in their encampments in the jungle. We didn't want to go, but they said that we had good bodies to be combatants. The life was bad [with the guerrillas]. They would give us only two tamales a day and not let us talk to each other. They would make us read propaganda from Nicaragua. We were very unhappy. Those who had family members in Mexico asked when they could see them and the guerrillas would say, 'When we triumph, when all of Guatemala is liberated.' That day will never come. The people don't want them. It made me glad to escape. The others would escape, too, if they could. But they are afraid of reprisals."

The former inhabitants of El Tumbo are desperate to have their loved ones returned to them. Yet, they say, no refugee relief organization has tried to reunite them with their families.

On 7 December 1986 I crossed the Usumacinta River into Mexico in search of people from El Tumbo. However, Guatemalans living on the Mexican banks north of Benemerito de las Americas told me relief agencies had moved them a few months before to the city of Palenque several hundred kilometers inside Mexico. I returned to Guatemala at nightfall.

Amnesty International, where are you?



I never knew the desert could be so cold as I rocked with the motion of the T-72, rolling along the base of the dawn-illuminated ridge just to our right. Next to me the battalion commander — his intense face barely illuminated by the red flashlight he was training on the map draped across the open hatch cover — issued an almost continuous stream of orders and instructions into his mike.

With no headset I was completely cut off from what was immediately going on, but I was aware of two things. The three battalions of the American battle group were cut off and surrounded in the place the troops called the Valley of Death, and the "Soviet Army, U.S.A." was on the attack. The battalion I was riding with — a long line of BMPs and T-72s stretching into the darkness behind me — was the third arm of the three-pronged attack that was going to roll over the Americans and destroy them completely. Textbook Soviet tactics.

I'd seen the plan at the 1700 briefing given yesterday by the "Soviet" commander in chief. The American commander had managed to get himself completely surrounded, and the might of the attacking Soviet Motorized Rifle Regiment, the 32nd Guards, would close the noose. They would jump off at 0645, striking simultaneously across the desert from the north, south and west, bypassing the American forward positions and scouts located to the east. I would ride with the western force which would move into attack position at 0430. C-in-C, Soviet forces, smiled slightly as he explained that the Americans, expecting a dawn attack, were in for a bit of a surprise.

# SOVIET ARMY, U.S.A.

Text & Photos by Warren Jorgensen

**Realism — from uniforms to weapons to tactics — is stressed in the OPFOR regiment. Troops spend two weeks in the OPFOR Academy learning the Soviet way of war.**

"At 1900 our dismounted infantry will begin hitting them," he said. "We will hit them all night long. Perhaps there won't be anything to attack in the morning." His hunter's smile grew even larger at the thought.

And hit them they did. At the 0200 preattack briefing, the commanding officer of the combined Soviet forces told us they had been chewing away at the Americans with great success. Recon patrols had probed the enemy's defenses, found the weak spots, and in small-unit actions throughout the night had chipped away at the perimeter. A TOW here, a tank, an APC, a truck there ... chew up a company, decimate a



## MARCHING ON

Other than his aversion to tanks, Warren Jorgensen enjoys the military scene. After four years as a Marine Corps grunt, he turned his talents to free-lance writing and photography. He's covered the action in the Middle East, Central America and Northern Ireland — traveling in with the first British troops headed for Londonderry — for a number of international publications. We welcome his first submission to SOF.

squad, destroy a mortar emplacement or a machine gun pit. Attack, attack, attack — all night long. The Americans had been under almost constant seige all along their line for nearly 11 hours when the tank attack jumped off.

I could sense rather than see the battalion behind me as they went into attack formation on The Shelf, the flat plain

**OPFOR uses a variety of vehicles — both Warsaw Pact and visually modified U.S. armor — to replicate a standard Soviet motorized infantry regiment.**

that overlooked the valley where the Americans waited. Dust and a low overcast ceiling limited visibility, and the solid wall of smoke that loomed up in front of us was going to cut it down even further. Something thumped my steel pot; the battalion commander was waving his gas mask at me. I

ripped mine out of the bag on my leg and got it on as we pushed into the gas, our speed unabated. The attack was on!

When we rolled into the gas my visibility inside the mask was cut to zero. I couldn't see my hand in

front of my face but I could tell from the movement of the tank that we were maneuvering. How? What the hell could the commanders see? What about the other tanks in our formation? Or the American tanks? Nobody could see shit in this, and yet I heard cannon and machine gun fire from all around me, including the tank I was riding on. We even picked up speed, for God's sake!

Now, I have the line company grunt's innate distrust of tanks ("You do two things with a tank, boy! You either ride it



home or you kill it, but you don't fight from it!") and that distrust was very real right now. God, I thought, please make it so they didn't build tank traps. The thought of having this behemoth roll over on me put a knot in my gut as big as your fist. Then we were out of the gas and we picked up even more speed. The battalion commander rattled off a burst from the machine gun, and as hot brass banged all over the hull I could see a light begin to blink in the distance. As my visibility improved in the dim light, I picked out a dozen or more blinking lights. Theirs, or ours?

Both. Victims of the firing I had listened to in the smoke. Suddenly we ground to a halt.

"Goddamn! Sonofabitch! Shit!" I didn't need a lesson plan to tell me the battalion commander was pissed. He grabbed his map and unplugged his headset. As another tank rolled up next to us he pulled himself out of the hatch, jumped across and roared off to join the battalion as it raced for the valley to the north.

I looked over my shoulder at the blinking yellow light. "No shit," I said to the desert. We were dead. I banged my pot down on the hull. Getting shot is a real pain in the ass.

I could hear the battle raging off to the north and east, well inside what had been the American perimeter. Within an hour

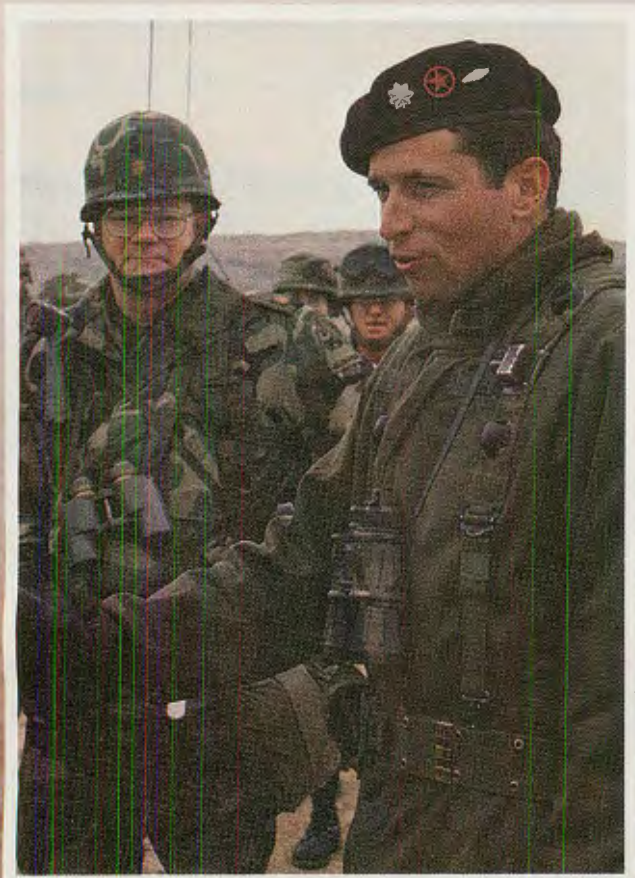
it was all over. Disabled and dead tanks, APCs, BMPs and trucks littered the desert floor, blocked roads and canted at odd angles in the wadis and on the ridges.

Who had won or lost this battle was beside the point. Another American unit had been thrown up against the Army's OPFOR (Opposing Force) comprised of

pseudo-Soviet forces and armor — and Soviet tactics right out of their FMs — on the sands of the Mojave Desert, Fort Irwin, California. The only thing missing was the blood.

They're cocky bastards, these "Soviets." You can see it on parade, around the base and in the field, and in the way they wear their black berets sporting the Soviet Star and their olive drab uniforms with the Soviet shoulder-board rank insignia. A whole slew of American units have found out just how good they are when they

**C-in-C, Soviet forces, Lieutenant Colonel William Janes, debriefs American Blue Force officers after the battle.**





**Blue Force 155mm self-propelled howitzers in action at Fort Irwin. A four-day live fire exercise using air and ground support forces precedes the OPFOR/Blue Force clash.**

**Soviet T-72s on display. NCO's collar patch and beret denote membership in the Military Intelligence Unconventional Warfare Unit.**

## UNCLE IVAN IS US

War games, maneuvers, mock battles — for centuries military leaders have used these training devices to prepare their troops for combat. With few exceptions, however, the strategies and tactics they employed have been their own rather than their potential enemy's. This inevitably led to the worst-case scenario of expending troops and equipment on the battlefield in order to learn their opponent's capabilities.

There's little doubt the Warsaw Pact powers will be our opponent should another major conflict occur, and our entire defense doctrine is based upon that premise. How can we best prepare our troops for that possibility? Simple. Create our own pseudo-Soviet adversary, train him with Soviet doctrine, arm and equip him with Soviet gear, and pit him against our own regular Army forces.

Since 1981, the U.S. Army's OPFOR (Opposing Force) has pulled combat training out of the realm of the mundane and thrust it into the harsh reality of the 1980s first-strike scenario. Stationed at the Army's National Training Center (NTC) at Fort Irwin, Calif., the 32nd Guards Motorized Rifle Regiment hammers and strikes, thrusts and parries, and generally fields all the dirty little tricks against units in training that Uncle Ivan is likely to employ.

32nd Guards, comprising the 1/73rd Armor and 6/31st Infantry battalions along with two attached Army or Marine infantry companies, is organized directly along the lines of a regular Warsaw Pact motorized infantry regiment and is the only OPFOR in existence in the Army.

Regiment strength numbers around 1,500 officers and men, all of whom attend the two-week OPFOR Academy located at Fort Irwin before taking to the field. During this training, potential "Soviets" are drilled in Warsaw Pact strategy, tactics and doctrine as well as safety, desert survival skills (Fort Irwin lies in the arid Mojave Desert) and the operation of the types of vehicles — both Soviet and modified American — they'll be using in the field. Attached troops used to supplement regiment strength, as well as gain exposure to the Soviet way of doing things, receive three days of intense safety, survival and doctrinal training before joining their comrades.

Along with appropriate uniforms, visually modified (VISMOD) U.S. Army vehicles are used to replicate the Warsaw Pact war machine. American troops are likely to encounter on the battlefield. Uncle Sam's M551 Sheridan, with a fiber glass face-lift here and there, becomes the Soviet T-72 MBT, BMP APC, 122mm self-propelled howitzer or ZSU-23-4 self-propelled anti-aircraft gun. M882 light trucks, with similar modification, become the Soviet BRDM-2 surface-to-air missile carrier, reconnaissance vehicle or anti-tank missile carrier.

Of the 170-plus vehicles in the regiment's armory, many are of the actual Warsaw Pact brand. Charlie Company, 203rd Military Intelligence Battalion, Fort Irwin, has the responsibility for maintaining these, and all of the other Soviet equipment — small arms and chemical munitions — obtained from Igor's Midnight Surplus Supply.

**U.S. M551 Sheridan  
armored  
reconnaissance/airborne  
assault vehicles are altered  
with fiber glass to  
represent Soviet armor.**



come to Fort Irwin to train against the ComBloc tactics these make-believe Soviets run against them.

They are the 32nd Guards Motorized Rifle Regiment made up of the 100-percent American 1st Battalion, 73rd Armor, and the 6th Battalion, 31st Infantry. These troops have a mission, they believe in it and themselves, and it shows. As Lieutenant Colonel John Schneeberger, CO of the infantry arm, proudly said, "We are as good as, if not better than, the average Soviet motorized rifle regiment."

They should be. OPFOR spends 310 days per year playing Soviet in the field, going up against American units sent here from all over the country to gain firsthand knowledge of what they might face if the Soviets break out at Fulda Gap or on the sands of the Middle East. Tactics of the regiment are right out of captured and constantly updated Soviet and ComBloc manuals. Their armor and vehicles can be actual captured Soviet models, but more often than not, they are visually modified American vehicles, closely conforming to the real thing.

Training on both sides is intense, involving 20-day cycles of 18- to 24-hour-per-day operations which include two days of pre-positioned equipment issue (much like troops deploying to Europe would encounter), four days of live fire exercises, 10 days of OPFOR encounter, and four days of cleanup and equipment turn-in. During the OPFOR segment, unit commanders are faced with all of the problems they are likely to encounter on the battlefield — supply, maintenance, casualty evacuation and replacement — without bits of bodies and copious quantities of blood splattering the countryside. It's as close

to the real thing as you're going to get.

OPFOR's program has been in operation since 1981, and has left countless chewed-up — but much wiser — Army unit commanders and troops in its wake. But just as each unit improves in performance from the first to the last day of each cycle, battalions that have been through the grinder once start off their second trips with higher performance and proficiency levels.

That's what this program is all about, and the 32nd Guards Motorized Rifle Regiment — Soviet Army, U.S.A. — is there to make sure it works. ✕

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## LASER BATTLEFIELD

For too many years Army field training went something like this: "Bang, Bang . . . you're dead." There was simply no way to simulate anything close to actual combat conditions. Unit commanders knew it and, even worse, so did the troops. Long hours of hammering in the basics of cover and concealment, fire and movement, and combat shooting all seemed to fall by the way when the grunts *knew* that it was really all make-believe.

No more.

Sitting in the heart of Fort Irwin, Calif., the Army's National Training Center, is the "Brain Box" located in the "Star Wars" building. This \$70 million B-Model MILES (Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System) computer forms the heart of the new era of realistic combat training. Its 40 communication channels continually track the battle raging between the Soviet-styled OPFOR (Opposing Force) and Blue Forces (regular Army units sent to NTC for training), recording everything from hits and misses between tank-killing systems to tactical radio communications.

In a nutshell, here's how MILES works at NTC when OPFOR and Blue lock horns.

Each soldier is equipped with silicon detectors fastened to both his LBE and helmet, and each vehicle has detectors which are mounted on belts on the front, rear and sides. Weapons are fitted with laser transmitters in the infrared range, and when a blank is fired, the laser fires.

If it's an infantryman versus infantryman engagement, the detection system senses a hit or near miss based upon the proximity of the laser "shot." If it's a near miss, an intermittent buzzerlike tone sounds from an alarm worn next to the soldier's left ear telling him it's time to shag ass and take cover. If it's on target, the alarm emits a continuous tone indicating that he's now kaput. Only by removing the yellow key from his weapon and inserting it into a special slot on his harness can he stop the tone. His weapon is now disabled, and the

unlucky trooper will begin the normal casualty evacuation chain to the rear (he can later be recycled back into the war as a replacement, but only after a controller or medical officer "reactivates" him with a green key).

Vehicle kills work on the same principle. The system has been programmed so that it takes a tank-killing weapon to kill a tank. An M60 machine gun will not stop a T-72, but a 122mm SP howitzer used in the direct-fire mode (as the Soviets often employ them) will stop an M60 MBT dead in its tracks. But there are shades of gray with which both attackers and defenders have to contend. The vehicle detectors can distinguish between a near miss, a hit or a kill. A luckless LAW gunner may have to make two or three shots to get a kill while the T-72 TC is busily hosing his position with machine gun fire. If the gunner gets his shot in and scores a kill, an alarm sounds in the vehicle, a strobe light comes on, and the gun systems are disabled.

All of these signals run through one of the 44 solar-powered relay stations located throughout Fort Irwin, and are then sent to a mountain-top computer site where locations are triangulated. Other data — types of weapons and numbers of rounds fired and at what time, and what vehicles were involved — is recorded, and this information is then transmitted to the Brain Box for analysis.

But since computers don't tell the whole story, eight mobile units cover the battle, videotaping the action and recording tactical radio traffic.

After the dust and smoke have cleared, specially equipped vans reach the battlefield within three hours bearing all the data and tapes for the After Action Review — the post-mortem conducted by NTC's combat trainers centered not on who won or lost, but rather on how things might have been done differently or better. Unit commanders can immediately see, hear — and realize — their mistakes, and make adjustments for the next phase of NTC's training cycle.

# COLOMBIA SITREP

## A Guerrilla Warfare Scorecard

by Ralph Johnson



**M**MORALES was just what the M-19 faction of the Colombian insurgent movement needed. The unsuspecting town looked like an easy nut to crack and its capture would give the guerrillas more than just a new store of food and supplies from the agricultural warehouse. M-19 also hoped for a badly needed psychological victory in order to show the citizens in this rich agricultural area that the army and police were powerless to keep them safe. The town of Morales would indeed be an easy, confidence-building target.

Some 500 insurgents proceeded toward Morales in the pre-dawn darkness of 3 February 1986. The main column infiltrated the streets at first light while two smaller units ringed the town as security.

**An armored car approaches the main entrance to the Palace of Justice. Photo: La Semana**

The guerrillas struck hard and enjoyed early success. Then they blew the door off the agricultural warehouse. The mayor's office was captured and local offices of Telecom, the national phone company, were occupied so the guerrillas could announce their success. Next to the mayor's office, the town archives were blazing from fires set by the insurgents in their attempt to destroy criminal records, records of land ownership and certificates of birth and death.

Two police officers rushed to respond to the commotion and were shot dead in the

streets; the rest barricaded themselves in the old police station behind the thick adobe walls and iron bars. The insurgents, armed with small arms (AKs and G3s), heavy machine guns, mortars and RPG-7 rocket launchers, did their best to dislodge the cops, but the policemen had a good field of fire — and their radio still worked.

The first government units arrived on the scene faster than anyone expected. Soldiers from the Counterinsurgency Rifle Battalion of the 3rd Infantry Brigade rushed into town itching to avenge the deaths of four of their members killed in an ambush 16 hours earlier. The unit was initially supported by helicopter gunships, and later by Urtu APCs and Cascavel armored cars.

The guerrillas withdrew to regroup at Los

Olivares, a nearby town straddling the Pan-American Highway, but the soldiers stuck to them, maintaining contact while again calling in helicopter gunships. Armored cars and troops encircled the Gs nearest to them, killing 25. As the remainder of the insurgent force fled, T-37 fighters (the Colombian version of the A-37 Dragonfly) began their runs.

What had seemed to the communists to be an easy victory turned into a costly defeat. When the day was through the insurgents had lost 70 KIA, the government forces three, including the two policemen in Morales.

The incident described above is not isolated. Rather, it is going on all over Colombia. The guerrillas are stepping up their depredations and indications are that things could get worse. At least two factors are combining to make the coming months difficult for this South American nation.

First is politics. The current conservative party government of President Belisario Betancur is conservative in name only. Betancur has angered many of his countrymen with his lukewarm response to the call for a firm stand against communism: instead of holding the line, he signed a so-called peace treaty with the major communist guerrilla front. But that may not last because elections are scheduled for March of 1986 and by law Betancur can't succeed himself. He is nothing but an unpopular lame duck.

Secondly, the communist insurgency is growing more intense. Using the "peace treaty" as a shield against government interference in the areas which it controls, the largest guerrilla unit, FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia), has armed itself to the teeth, resupplied, equipped and recruited thousands of new fighters. But other insurgent movements have refused to sign the peace treaty and are continuing to fight.

In the southern provinces of Cauca and Valle de Cauca, the various insurgent movements who have not agreed to the treaty have, at the instigation of the M-19 faction, formed the "Coordinated National Guerrillas," whereby they hope to unite militarily and seize the southern zone. They would then pronounce the territory a "liberated zone" independent from Colombian central authority and seek help and military assistance from the rest of the communist world.

The Coordinated National Guerrillas have been joined in southern Colombia by troops from other South American and Central American countries. Proving that the Latin American insurgent movement truly knows no borders, the newly formed group has troops from Peru's "Tumpac-Amarau," Ecuador's "Alfaro Vive," a Bolivian group, communists from Panama, El Salvadoran guerrillas, and, of course, Nicaraguan Sandinistas. This group has been brought together by the Colombian M-19 faction and has taken the name of "Battalion America," numbering about 500 combatants.



**TOP: Revolutionary chic: These women played terrorist once too often and were killed with their comrades at the Palace of Justice. Photo: Captured from guerrillas**

**ABOVE: Failed ambush: Guerrillas pay the price after an attack on a military convoy. Photo: Anon**

Why this mixed bag of communist guerrillas have come together for joint action at this time and place is curious. Members of these insurgent units have trouble agreeing even among themselves, let alone unifying under one command. The thinking among Colombian military intelligence officials is that they have combined to show strength through revolutionary solidarity. They think that the time is right for dramatic action in southern Colombia which, if successful, can be used as a base from which to topple the rest of Latin America.

Meanwhile, FARC is using the peace treaty to its advantage, knowing that the free ride is going to come to an end after the elections. Captured documents show that they have a preparatory phase, during which they intend to plan operations against pre-selected targets, hijack aircraft to use in resupply and support roles (some 16 private aircraft of all kinds have been hijacked in the last three months), and train intensively in specialty areas needed to conduct large-scale offensive operations, i.e., medics, snipers, communications, etc. The second

phase calls for strikes against preselected targets.

FARC's 1986 plans call for prolonging the truce, unifying the various guerrilla factions under FARC command and for protesting, as loudly and with as much media attention as possible, supposed human rights violations by the Colombian armed forces.

One indication that FARC is feeling stronger is that it is now operating in units of 100 or more — company size — where previous columns were composed primarily of smaller units of 20 to 30.

Colombia's political and military problems are compounded by its recent economic woes. Development of rich petroleum reserves in the Arauca region, containing perhaps as much oil as Venezuela's rich fields, has been stopped due to harassment of seismic crews and guerrilla demands for protection money. Further, a trans-Colombia oil pipeline project has been stalled due to rumors of government nationalization of petroleum production and guerrilla depredation. The ELN (National Liberation Army) guerrilla group also recently blew the existing oil pipeline and a nearby bridge, probably with dynamite that they seized from a seismic party two weeks before the blast.

Against the communist insurgency stand the Colombian armed forces (Fuerzas Armadas de Colombia), or FAC, a tough,





disciplined force. Commanded by officers of exceptional caliber, the troops will stand their ground and fight. They prefer to be on the attack, although many are needed for security duty, a task common in guerrilla warfare.

Among its other troop units FAC has three independent airborne battalions and a *Lancero* (Lancer) battalion, with training and skills roughly equivalent to U.S. Army Rangers. Like the Rangers, *Lancero* graduates are also posted to infantry and other units where their training serves them well. Many officers and NCOs have been to the U.S. Army's School of the Americas in the Canal Zone to receive various courses in small-unit tactics, guerrilla warfare and jungle skills.

The military has grown increasingly frustrated with Betancur's "peace treaty." There have been twice as many casualties, both military and civilian, during the 18 months of the treaty than there were in the 18 months preceding the pact. No matter who wins the elections the military is likely to be allowed to resume their operations against the insurgent base areas.

Although Betancur has cut the FAC budget in half, the military and national police have nonetheless scored some impressive successes. One of the biggest blows to the M-19 movement came in October 1985 when the army caught up with Ivan Marino, founder of the M-19 movement.

Marino had been living in a house on a tranquil hillside in a respectable neighborhood in Cali, a southern city of over 1 mil-

**TOP: General Vargas Villegas directs the final assault on the Palace of Justice. Photo: La Semana**

**ABOVE: José Fedor Rey: "The Monster of the Andes." Photo: Anon**



**Young EPL guerrillas: Teenagers are often susceptible to communist propaganda. Photo: Ralph Johnson**



lion people. From this house he directed the terrorist activities of his group until military intelligence units located Marino and surrounded the house. Marino and another M-19 leader, Gerado Ospina, refused to surrender and died in the assault that followed. In the house, government troops found dozens of weapons, among them M1 Carbines, HK91s, FN FALs, M14s, .38-caliber pistols and RPG-7 rockets.

With the strengthening of the communist insurgents and the recent close cooperation of many different Central and South American communist insurgent groups inside Colombia the question arises: Why Colombia? Why is this particular nation so important to the communists? And why now?

Colombia is in a strategic position. It is, in fact, the key to communist penetration of the South American continent. Colombia has two coasts, one on the Caribbean and one on the Pacific Ocean, and is in a position to cut off the Panama Canal from either side. Colombia has borders with five other Latin American republics: Panama, Peru, Ecuador, Venezuela and Brazil. These frontiers are lightly guarded and logistic trails are already in formation.

The position of the United States toward Colombia has been one of providing a little help. Colombian military sources reveal that many of the arms now being received from the United States are of World War II vintage, and government troops are out-gunned by the guerrillas' AKs and G3s.

Many Americans — both in and out of government — tend to view Colombia as a country which dumps drugs — primarily cocaine and marijuana — into the United States, and they resent aid to people whom they consider to be drug traffickers. In fact, the drug traffic is often controlled by the communist guerrilla movements. Drug revenues, together with kidnaping and extortion, are used by the insurgent movements to finance their armed struggle. Independent producers exist, but they are required to pay the insurgents off in cash, drugs or arms.

SOF has seen documents from the FARC command encouraging their field commanders to push more drugs "regardless of the consequences" to finance pending operations and political activities. With that kind of muscle behind the drug barons in Colombia, Washington cannot realistically expect to plug all the holes through which drugs flow into the United States. Rather, they have to confront the problem at its root — the Colombian drug lords.

In order to fight the two-headed specter of communism and the drug trade, the Colombian military needs communications gear, helicopters and assistance with civic action projects. Colombia is a strategic nation and she is in trouble.

The United States can't allow the situation to deteriorate into a communist takeover, nor should that ever happen as long as the United States follows a coherent foreign

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## REVOLUTION WITHOUT BORDERS

The operation showed a boldness not often seen in a Third World revolution. On 6 November 1985, 35 M-19 Marxist guerrillas posing as police officers drove up to the Palace of Justice in Bogotá, Colombia, and captured the building and most of the members of the Supreme Court.

In a backlash brought on by President Betancur's soft line on communist terrorism, the army refused to compromise with the M-19 attackers. The assault began and for six and a half hours havoc reigned. When it was over, 115 people had died in the flames and bullets that engulfed the Palace of Justice. All the M-19 guerrillas involved in the attack were killed.

How did this relatively recent addition to the Colombian communist line-up manage to stage such a bold attack? The United States leveled a charge of Sandinista complicity during a special assembly of the Organization of American States held four weeks later in Cartagena, Colombia, when U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz accused the Nicaraguan government of having close ties with M-19. Not surprisingly, the Sandinistas vehemently denied the charge.

The Colombian press was not exactly sympathetic to Sandinista claims of innocence, however. *El Tiempo* and *El Espectador*, Bogotá's two influential daily newspapers, hit the newsstands with reports that Nicaragua's Sandinistas had indeed been involved. Citing an unnamed source, *El Tiempo* reported that a clandestine commando team entered Colombia from Nicaragua with Colombian passports two weeks before the assault. Holing up in a house in southern Bogotá (address: 8-42, 6th Avenue), the Sandinistas proceeded to set up a training camp for M-19, according to *El Tiempo*. The newspaper also reported that the attack was patterned after the August 1978 attack led by Eden Pastora on the National Palace in Managua, Nicaragua.

Despite denials by the Sandinistas, evidence of their involvement mounted as the weeks passed. The press published details about the identity of the guerrillas as well as the code names of five Sandinistas who allegedly took part in the plot to take the Palace of Justice.

Physical evidence surfaced in the form of weapons. Arms used in the attack were traced to several sources, including a shipment supplied to the Sandinistas by former Venezuelan President Carlos Andrés Pérez to aid the Marxists in their battle to overthrow Somoza. Reports indicate that 20 of the



ABOVE: Colombian soldier wearing typical spotted camouflage carries a G3 while on guard duty. BELOW: EPL guerrillas mount a propaganda campaign in a rural village. Photos: Ralph Johnson



40 weapons captured after the attack could be traced to Nicaragua.

During the aftermath of the attack, Colombian officials arrested two guerrillas in the town of Medellín. Rafael Ernesto Cardenas Lopez, a Sandinista, and Sandra Perez, a Colombian, had handled communications for the guerrillas during the assault and, according to reports, codes and frequencies through which the guerrillas communicated with Cuba and Nicaragua were found in the house.

M-19 certainly didn't intend to solidify the government ranks in opposition to

their cause, but that's basically what happened. Before the attack, President Betancur had asked for adherence to the Contadora call for an end to U.S. involvement in Nicaragua. Not all of his cabinet members were as trusting of Sandinista intentions and the assault on the Palace of Justice did little to change their minds. Perhaps Nicaraguan involvement in the attack proved what the Reagan administration — and the Sandinistas — has been saying all along. The communists in Nicaragua do have a revolution without borders.

# M14

## Rebirth of an American Classic

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis



**N**OT all dinosaurs are extinct. One thunder lizard, the U.S. M14 rifle, lives on in the clouded memories of some Vietnam veterans and in the hands of many high-power shooters. By all criteria, it's a "man's rifle," but its most vaunted characteristics doomed it to failure as a modern infantry rifle.

The M14's origins lie with its justly famous predecessor, the M1 Garand. While the M1 Garand served with distinction beyond that of any other World War II infantry rifle, by 1944 its shortcomings were obvious. It was too heavy, its eight-round en bloc clip was less than satisfactory and there was no selective-fire capability. Experiments to correct these deficiencies resulted in the Springfield Armory T20 series which was supposed to employ a 20-round magazine compatible with the Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR). Remington also prepared several prototypes based on the M1 Garand: the T22 series, the T23 and the T27. All were unsatisfactory. While Frankford Arsenal was developing a new cartridge, the T65, Earle Harvey, Colonel René R. Studler's protégé at Springfield, was designing the 7-pound T25 which did not hold up under sustained full-auto fire. This was followed by the T47, which in turn was replaced by the T44 and adopted as the M14 on 1 May 1957.

The M14's production history is filled with intrigue, deceit, incompetence and calamity. Exploring it would fill several novels. Suffice to say that in addition to Springfield Armory,

Semiautomatic-only M14s are currently being sold in the United States at prices attractive to collectors and shooters alike.

three companies were awarded production contracts out of the 42 firms that entered bid proposals in March 1961. Production ceased on 30 June 1964. Deliveries were as follows: Springfield Armory, 167,000; Harrington & Richardson Inc., 537,582; Thompson Ramo Wooldridge (TRW), 319,163; and Olin Mathieson Chemical Corp. (Winchester), 356,501. Unit cost ranged from \$69.75 to \$85 each. Phased out of the Vietnam War by what some bitterly still refer to as the "mouse gun" (M16), M14s soon found their way into the hands of our allies.

Israel, at that time desperate for weapons, received a significant quantity of M14s. But with Galil production well-established, the IDF no longer has much need for M14s or M16s, although it is still used in its most successful form, the M21 sniper rifle. A large number of these M14s have been imported by Armscorp of America for sale in kit form minus the receivers since selective-fire receivers cannot be sold to the public in the United States. Suggested retail price for a kit, less receiver, is \$249.95. Each kit comes from a single rifle, and most of the components appear to be virtually new.

It's commonly held that TRW M14s are the best. Not so. Early difficulties aside, all rifles accepted by the U.S. Army from any of the four producers conform to MilSpec. But if you insist on a TRW kit, it will cost you a modest \$10 extra.

A semiautomatic-only receiver is also available from Armscorp. Manufactured by Smith Enterprises in Mesa, Arizona, this investment casting from 8620 steel has been mill-finished to attract the traditionalist. The receiver is marked "U.S. RIFLE, 7.62-MM M-14, SMITH ENT." with the serial number. Some of the tool marks have been left unpolished to simulate the exact appearance of original M14 receivers. The Smith receiver has been heat treated by case hardening to a depth of .012-.017-inch (with an average depth of .015-inch) to achieve a hardness of 53-58 Rockwell C scale, front to back, an important factor since the elevation serrations sometimes wear severely on other M14/M1A receivers.

Smith's receiver is MilSpec in the areas where it needs to be. In other places it has been modified and improved. These receivers are random magnetic particle inspected and x-rayed at the foundry. Finish is by the zinc phosphate method. Suggested retail price for this receiver is \$299.95 with purchase of a parts kit (\$319.95 separately). Parts kits are available for immediate delivery, but there is currently a 12-14-week back order on receivers.

Let's take a close look at the M14's method of operation before we discuss its salient features and how well these kits perform when assembled on a receiver. After the trigger is squeezed to rotate the hammer forward and drive the firing pin to ignite the cartridge primer, the bullet moves up the bore and a portion of the propellant gases passes through the vent drilled into the bottom of the barrel. The gases move past a cutoff valve, which can be rotated for grenade launching, and through a hole in the piston.

The piston's hollow interior fills with gas and the piston is forced rearward, driving the operating rod and bolt with it when enough pressure has developed to overcome the forces represented by friction and the recoil spring. Once the piston starts rearward its port and the barrel's gas vent are no longer in alignment and no further gas can enter the system, escaping instead to the atmosphere via an exhaust hole in the gas cylinder after the piston has moved backward 1.5 inches. Like the M60 GPMG, this system supposedly requires no gas regulator. In theory the pressure required to move the operating rod and bolt will automatically increase until it is sufficient to counter the forces of inertia. In the jungles of Vietnam it didn't always work that way.

The operating rod goes through 3/8-inch of free travel to permit chamber pressures to drop to a safe level before a hump on the op rod's cam slot forces the bolt roller upward. This motion disengages the bolt's two locking lugs from the receiver's locking recesses. This rotation to the left provides the primary extraction required to loosen and unseat the empty case from the chamber. As the bolt moves back, the empty case is



**TOP:** M14A1 muzzle compensator fits over flash suppressor and reduces felt recoil and muzzle climb.

**ABOVE:** M15 grenade launcher sight.

extracted and held to the bolt face by the extractor claw. As soon as the case is completely withdrawn from the chamber, the ejector drives the "bump"-type ejector rod forward to throw the case out of the rifle to the right. Ejection is not as violent as in the Kalashnikov series and cases form a neat pile 3 to 4 feet from the muzzle. The op rod's hump also assists the ejection process to a small degree. The compressed recoil spring drives the bolt forward to strip a round from the magazine and chamber it. When set for semiautomatic fire the trigger must be released and pressed again to fire another shot.

Powered by a gas system first developed for the White semiautomatic rifle of 1929, this portion of the M14 consists of five major components. A knurled plug is threaded to the front of the gas cylinder and must be removed with a combination tool. A little more than 3 1/2 inches in length, the piston has a 1 1/4-inch solid shaft and 1 1/4-inch hollow cylinder with seven gas grooves around its external circumference and a single gas port. The gas cylinder itself is held in place by a lock piece threaded to the barrel. A slot-headed spindle valve attached to the gas cylinder must be rotated with the combo tool so its slot is parallel to the barrel, shutting off gas flow to the piston, for launching grenades with the M64 blank cartridge.

The gas system lies under the barrel, which is 22 inches long with chromed chamber and bore. There are four grooves with a right-hand twist of one turn in 12 inches. Threaded to the receiver at the chamber end, barrel threads at the muzzle retain the efficient 3-inch flash suppressor. With five elongated slots on the sides and top, the flash suppressor body also contains a bayonet lug and the front sight assembly. A knurled and notched nut retains this assembly on the barrel and requires a so-called "capstan" wrench to install or remove. An allen-head jam nut prevents the capstan nut from backing off.

The operating rod, recoil spring, guide rod and bolt are

patterned in general after the M1 Garand. While the recoil spring and guide rod still travel in the op rod's hollow interior, the guide rod is held to the receiver by a simple pin connector lock while that of the Garand is attached to the en bloc clip's follower and spring assembly. A roller has also been added to the M14's right locking lug.

The sighting system on this rifle is a great classic in the American military tradition, although a bit complicated for most. Patterned after the M1 Garand, the blade front sight has open protective ears and can be adjusted for windage zero by sliding the assembly in its dovetail after the allen-head set screw has been loosened. The drum-type rear sight has a peep aperture. Its elevation knob, on the left side, is adjustable from zero to 72 very audible clicks. Eight to 12 clicks should get you on the paper at 100 meters. Match shooters like to get this down to six clicks by milling down the front sight blade 10 to 15 thousandths (maintaining the forward angle). The rear sight aperture can be adjusted from zero to 16 clicks to the right or left of the center index line by rotating the windage knob on the right side. You can minimize wear on these components with a light coating of PARR All Weather Weapons Lube (PARR Inc., Dept. SOF, 18400 Syracuse Ave., Cleveland, OH 44110) on the knob serrations.

One click of elevation or windage will move the bullet's strike approximately 0.7 centimeters at a range of 25 meters. To compute the distance that one click will move the bullet's strike at a given range, divide the range (in meters) by 25 meters and multiply by 0.7 centimeters. U.S. Army doctrine during the M14's era prescribed a battlesight zero of 250 meters. This can be obtained by zeroing the rifle at 25 meters since the trajectory will provide a point of impact at that distance which matches the point of impact at a range of 250 meters.

After the battlesight zero has been obtained, the rear sight must be calibrated. Turn the elevation knob forward until it reaches the lowest setting and count the number of clicks required to do this. Loosen the set screw in the center of the elevation knob with the combo tool until the knob can again be rotated forward. Rotate the elevation knob forward until the 250-meter index line (the long line between the numbers 2 and 4 on the knob) is aligned with the receiver's index line. This is

**The M14's M2 bipod is a sturdy and useful accessory that clamps onto the gas cylinder and cylinder lock. Unfortunately, it's a bit too heavy.**

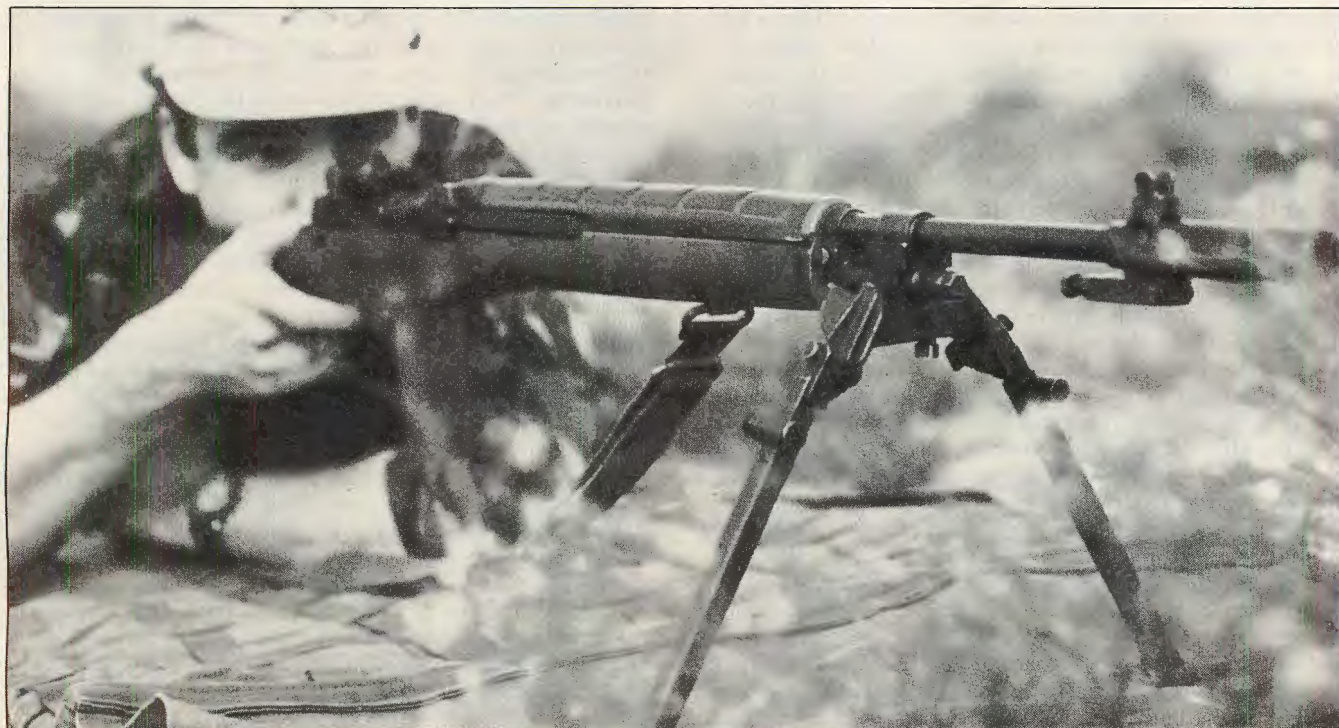


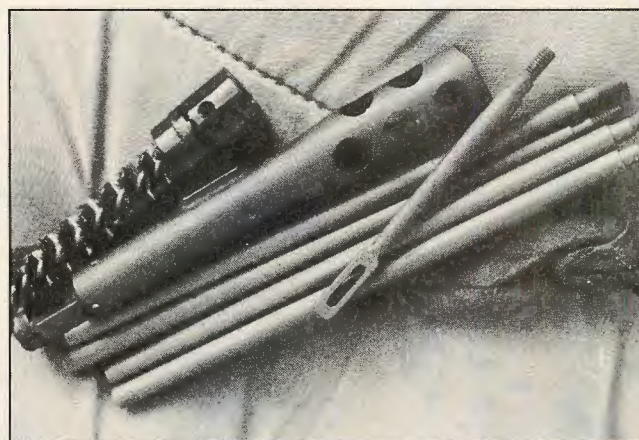
**M14 development borrowed heavily from its famous ancestor, the M1 Garand.**

missing on the Smith receiver, so turn the knob until the 250-meter mark is upper dead center. Turn it forward the exact number of clicks required to achieve the 250-meter battlesight zero. Tighten the center screw. Rack the rear sight out to its highest elevation setting and tighten the center screw again. Turn the elevation knob back down to its lowest setting. Turn back up the number of clicks required to reach the battlesight zero and the 250-meter line should be exactly upper dead center.

A clip guide is mounted directly in front of the rear sight assembly. By this means, the magazine can be loaded in place with five-round stripper clips. The bolt's hold-open release lever is located directly below the clip guide on the left side of the receiver.

In order to send bullets downrange to zero the rifle, you must, of course, pull the trigger first. As with some of its other parts, the M14's trigger mechanism was lifted right out of the M1 Garand. Its major components are a hammer with two hooks, a trigger with an extension that is the main sear, and a spring-loaded secondary sear directly behind. When the hammer is cocked, it is held back by the main sear. When the trigger is pulled, the main sear moves forward off its notch on the





## SEMI-AUTOMATIC M14 SPECIFICATIONS

<b>Caliber</b> .....	7.62x51mm NATO (.308 Win.)
<b>Operation</b> .....	Gas. No regulator. Piston impinges upon operating rod. Locking by means of rotary two-lug bolt (with roller on right lug). Fire from the closed-bolt position.
<b>Feed</b> .....	20-round detachable staggered box-type magazine.
<b>Weight, empty</b> .....	8.7 pounds
<b>Length, overall</b> .....	44.3 inches
<b>Barrel</b> .....	Four-groove with a right-hand twist of one turn in 12 inches. Chrome-lined bore and chamber.
<b>Barrel length</b> .....	22 inches
<b>Sights</b> .....	Blade-type front with protective ears; adjustable for windage zero. M1 Garand-type rear with peep aperture; adjustable for elevation and windage; each audible click moves the strike of the bullet 2.8 centimeters at 100 meters.
<b>Finish</b> .....	Phosphate
<b>Furniture</b> .....	Walnut or fiber glass stock with plastic handguard.
<b>Accessories</b> .....	M2 bipod, M14A1 muzzle compensator, winter trigger and safety, blank-firing attachment and breech shield, M76 grenade launcher and M15 grenade launcher sight. M6 bayonet and M8A1 scabbard, combination tool and rod, cleaning equipment and web sling.
<b>Prices</b> .....	Parts set only, \$249.95; Smith receiver with purchase of parts set, \$299.95 (\$319.95 if purchased separately); complete rifle (assembled), \$674.95 with used stock, \$744.95 with new walnut stock.
<b>Manufacturers</b> .....	Harrington & Richardson, U.S. Govt. Springfield Armory, Thompson Ramo Wooldridge, Winchester and Smith Enterprises.
<b>Distributor</b> .....	Armcorp of America, Dept. SOF, 9162 Brookville Road, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

TOP: Blank-firing attachment and breech shield.

ABOVE: M14 combination tool, cleaning rod and chamber brush.

hammer and the hammer rotates up and forward, driven by its coil spring. When the bolt moves back and rolls the hammer down, it's caught by the secondary sear.

In semiautomatic fire, when the trigger is released, the secondary sear moves back out of engagement with the hammer. As the hammer starts forward after the trigger has been released, it is caught once more by the main sear and held until the trigger is pulled again. In full auto the hammer is also held by the secondary sear, but rotation of the eccentric selector shaft to the "A" position moves the connector assembly rearward into contact with the operating rod and the sear release to the rear into contact with the secondary sear, causing it to release the hammer and fire a round every time the bolt closes until the trigger is released. The safety is mounted in the front portion of the trigger guard; again, just like the Garand. Push forward to disengage. When engaged it blocks the main sear and prevents the trigger from being pulled rearward.

The trigger pull is of the two-stage type preferred by the U.S. military. After drawing up the slack, pull weight on the specimen sent to SOF for test and evaluation was a crisp and consistent 5 pounds. The trigger mechanism was unaltered in any way from MilSpec.

Attached to the trigger housing by a roll pin, the magazine catch release lever must be pressed forward to remove the magazine. Loaded magazines should be tilted forward and rolled back when inserted into the magazine well. Vaguely based on that of the BAR, the 20-round staggered-column box magazine is a decided step forward in reliability. M14 magazines were fabricated by a number of different subcontractors. Their mark will always be found at the back of the magazine's body near the bottom. As they are all MilSpec, none are preferable to any other, but beware of unmarked

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# AIRBORNE



Descending during combat jump at Suncheon: 3,290 troops jumped from 80 C-119 aircraft.

## INTO KOREA

### Journalist Jumps for Combat Copy

Text & Photos by Howard Sochurek

**M**ACARTHUR was on a roll. By 10 September 1950 North Korean forces had cornered the Americans and the South Koreans, but by 15 September, the recently appointed supreme commander of American forces in Korea had turned the tables by launching a counterattack that eventually drove the communist Koreans to the Yalu River. By the middle of October this brilliant series of long runs had brought South Korean and American forces to the gates of Pyongyang. MacArthur ransacked his tactical arsenal for anything which might

increase his speed of advance, finding one more weapon: airborne troops.

Soldiers from the 187th Regimental Combat Team had been called from training at Fort Bragg to jump on Kimpo airstrip in Seoul. But the Inchon landing and subsequent taking of Seoul moved so quickly that they never accomplished their original mission.

I joined the unit on Thursday, 12 October 1950, at their bivouac area just off Kimpo airstrip. I wondered what kind of troops these airborne soldiers were. I quickly found out.

Most of the companies were formed around a core of combat veterans; the rest of the ranks were filled out with 17- to 20-year-olds. For the most part they had joined the airborne for the badge, for the boots and for the extra bucks. They were cocky and they were sure . . . but they had seen nothing of war.

If I was going to play the game with these airborne soldiers, I had to learn the rules. So it was off to a jump school for nonjumpers. There I met another man in nonairborne shoes, Captain Reuel "Stony" Stallones, a doctor from

Lindsay, California. Both of us had been thrown into an unfamiliar situation which we both disliked, so it was only natural that a strong friendship grew.

One day, while Stony treated me for an infected foot, we talked about how unnatural it was for a man to throw himself from an airplane a thousand feet above the ground; everything in the human will opposed it. We speculated on how foolish we had been to volunteer for this mission. We also swore that if we accomplished it once we would never do it again.

Misgivings aside, there was a good reason for both of us to be here. Stony was referred to by his medical aid men as "ground gripper" and it was necessary

for him, being a part of a jump outfit, to become a jumper. My reason was different. I had arrived late to this war and, in my opinion, there was only one good story left and this was it. I had to become a part of it and jumping was the only way to do it. Little did I know of the events to follow.

Together we went through jump school and talked of medicine and journalism, passing the evenings over a treasured copy of *Time* magazine, probably the only one in all of Korea.

On Thursday at 0800 hours, 19 October, Colonel Frank S. Bowen, regimental commander of the 187th Regimental Combat Team called all attached journalists into his command

**Russian anti-aircraft gun near drop zone with remnants of U.S. Air Force single-engine spotter plane in background. Some Russian soldiers and officers were known to be advisers to North Korean forces in Pyongyang.**







**One of the paratroopers returning from the tunnel in which he found the remains of American POWs also found this photograph. It shows Kim Il Sung (extreme right, bottom row) surrounded by his Soviet advisers.**

post. He told us that he had received orders the night before to jump off Friday morning into two separate drop zones. He was sending the 1st and 3rd Battalions into the town of Sukchon and the 2nd Battalion into the town of Sunchon. He defined his mission as fourfold: one, to block the escape routes of the Pyongyang army; two, to prevent reinforcements for that army; three, to assist I Corps in the capture of Pyongyang; and four, to assist in the liberation of any American POWs.

We were going to jump 35 miles north of Pyongyang and approximately 100 miles south of the Manchurian border. If the Pyongyang battle went well Col. Bowen expected a link-up within a matter of days; if not, we would be left surrounded by the enemy until a link-up could be effected.

I asked Col. Bowen if there were any known prisoners in our jump area. He said that an Air Force report had given the location of a POW train as being just south of the city of Sunchon and that if we jumped in time we might save the unknown number of Americans aboard.

I should have had some clue of the fun we were in for from Col. Bowen's last words as he dismissed us: "You're going to get your boots muddy and spoil the shine."

I had searched the regiment for a likely unit to join on the operation. Through Jim Cannon of the *Baltimore Sun* who made the introduction, I found the man I wanted to jump with in the person of Major Mike Holland of Brooklyn, an ex-New York cop and ex-OSS parachutist with 59 jumps to his credit. Holland struck me as the right kind of guy to be next to when the going got rough, so I joined his stick for the jump. I would be with Charlie Company, 1st Battalion.

After a bad sleep, at 0300 hours on Friday 20 October, I fell out onto the company street to report for the last roll call. A cold and heavy rain had hit us that morning and our mood fit the weather perfectly. Captain Dan Melvin, Charlie Company commander from Portland, Indiana, called the roll and we fell into a rough march down the sodden strip of mud that passed for a road. It was a typical Korean road — at the hint of rain a quagmire of knee-deep slime oozed from the earth making passage almost impossible. Soldiers slipped in hidden potholes and came up dripping and swearing as we shuffled through the newborn swamp toward the airfield.

An hour had passed before we came onto the blacktop which was Kimpo. The waiting herds of cargo cows, the Air Force C-119s, lined and crossed Kimpo airfield as far as the eye could see. After an hour's wait and a cup of coffee — a welcome gift from a thoughtful mess sergeant who had brought a canteenful with him — we were herded to our planes. Ours was number 9132 and it was to be number 16 over the target area.

It was announced that poor weather would cause a three-hour delay in the timetable. The feeling of relaxation and ease which crept over everyone at the announcement was obvious. It was as if we had been given a reprieve. With all of this time and temporary freedom, I expected some movement from the men, but I found them strangely inarticulate or unwilling to speak. Most of them

huddled, some sleeping, beneath the huge bellies of the cargo cows. I turned my attention to finding a secure place on my jump gear for my Japanese aerial camera so it would be in a position to shoot while in the air between plane and ground. I had been warned that the opening shock as the chute exploded into bloom might cause any loose equipment to smash the face of the jumper. I sought out a rigger, a corporal wearing a little red baseball cap, who checked and double-checked my gear and lashed my camera to the D-ring of my parachute harness. He assured me that all was secure, that my parachute had been properly packed and that the gear would not be catapulted from me while in midair. I sat down with my 130 pounds of equipment and waited for the takeoff.

At 1200 hours the rain stopped and the scud that hung immediately above us started drifting south. We were given the word to be ready and at 1220 the planes' engines began to whine. The din on the airstrip as 80 C-119s checked their engines gave some confidence to those of us who were soon to experience our first combat jump. Shortly after 1230 we left the earth, moved westward to the sea, then headed north along the coast. I looked over toward Maj. Holland who was to lead the stick out of the ship. I was to be second.

As we trundled through the skies, I asked Maj. Holland what he was thinking about. His reply was matter-of-fact. "I'm thinking of that ammo we had to leave behind so we could get this thing off the runway."

Within 10 minutes we were flying over enemy-held territory.

Private Robert White of Knoxville, Tennessee, a youngster of 17, sat immediately across from me. Our plane held 42 men, 21 on each side. Private White was thinking the things that all of us were thinking. He was scared to death. He looked it, and when I asked him how he felt his only comment was, "I got butterflies."

Just before 1400 we got the "stand up and hook up" from Maj. Holland. I noticed a red bulkhead light flash on as I hooked my static line and snapped it tight. My body became numb, my palms moist. At exactly 1400 a green light popped on next to the red one and I saw Maj. Holland leap from the doorway. I followed him without thinking, clutching my camera with my left hand, protecting my face with my right palm. Seconds later the opening shock of the chute jarred me. I threw my head back to see if my chute was open and functioning, then started shooting pictures madly. I heard the shouts of frightened Koreans down below and the chatter of their machine guns, but they were evidently firing wildly because in the sector in which I landed we encountered no enemy fire.

Fifty feet above the ground I released

my camera and reached high on the risers of my chute. I thought about what Maj. Holland had told me — relax, bend slightly at the knees and keep both feet together. In the next instant I found myself breathless and on the ground. The nearest parachute that I could see was 65 feet from me and I felt frighteningly alone.

The boys in the first waves had already laid down a blanket of fire at God knows what. I thrashed at my harness, removed my main chute harness after removing my auxiliary chute, and picked up my cameras. I started running toward an embankment hoping to escape the heavy equipment which was scheduled to drop on top of us. My camera clicked constantly as I fled the drop zone.

Ten minutes later the sky again blossomed with great chutes that envisioned the fall of jeeps, howitzers and anti-tank guns. I joined Col. Bowen on the edge of the drop zone and found that Charlie Company had already taken the town of Sukchon meeting only light resistance and suffering no casualties.

We had moved off the drop zone

and were headed toward Hill 79, the spot selected by Col. Bowen for the command post that first night. A patrol moved out in front of us as we pushed forward. Now and then a frightened Korean would creep from his hiding place behind a stack of rice straw with hands high in the air. Shamed, whitefaced and groveling, they pleaded for their lives. Few lived. After all, Maj. Holland had said that his boys "fight just to fight." As I saw an unarmed civilian running for his life mowed down by a BAR, a sense of shame fell over me. I heard the excited cry come from the direction of fire, "Got me a gook."

At 1615 we reached the command post. Ingenious GIs had already latched on to native labor and I took the hint quickly. My first concern was for a long, deep hole and I applied the nearest able-bodied Korean to the task. While I

As I headed back from Sukchon to the airport at P'yongyang I passed Bill Russian war memorial. It was near a cemetery for Russians who were killed in both WWII and those advisers killed during the Korean War of 1950. North Korean defectors it is believed





supervised the digging procedure in my best sign language, Bob Vermilion, a UPI correspondent who had also jumped in with us, hobbled up. Bob had seriously injured his ankle when he hit a soft area of the drop zone. Experienced jumpers claim soft, wet ground causes more casualties than firmer earth. We talked for a while, shared some cold rations and soon were caught in the early Korean darkness.

My foxhole was cold and wet and the only protection from the ground was a Marine poncho that *Life* photographer Dave Duncan had willed to me before leaving Japan. I wrapped it around me and sought the security of darkness in my gravelike hole. I was cold, I was hungry, I was wet with my own perspiration but I was on the ground. My boyhood prayers of thanksgiving held a new meaning for me that night.

Another drop was scheduled for Saturday morning and I decided to photograph it. While I was there, I came across 2nd Lieutenant Bob Rosado of Woodside, Long Island. A piece of equipment had crashed his main chute, his reserve chute had malfunctioned and he had fallen free from an altitude of approximately 500 feet. Medics had reached him by the time I arrived and on checking later I found that he had suffered a broken back. Malfunctions of this kind are rare; only once in a blue moon did both the main chute and the auxiliary chute fail. Of the airdropping of 4,064 men, 90 were listed as jump casualties, Rosado being one of the most serious of these.

On Sunday I dropped by the new church/command post of Col. Bowen and found him perched in the place usually reserved for the altar. As I photographed him Lieutenant Colonel William N. Rodgers, commander of Task Force Rodgers, strolled briskly into the command post. He was passing through and wanted to pay his regards. The link-up of the elements of the airborne and the 1st Cavalry Division had been carried off.

Later I rode with Lt. Col. Rodgers to the east of Sukchon. As I saw a six-mile-long column of tanks from the 70th Armor Battalion rumble through Sukchon I felt that the war was close to

*Continued on page 87*

**TOP:** All that is left of 75 American POWs killed by their captors after their train was halted north of DZ.

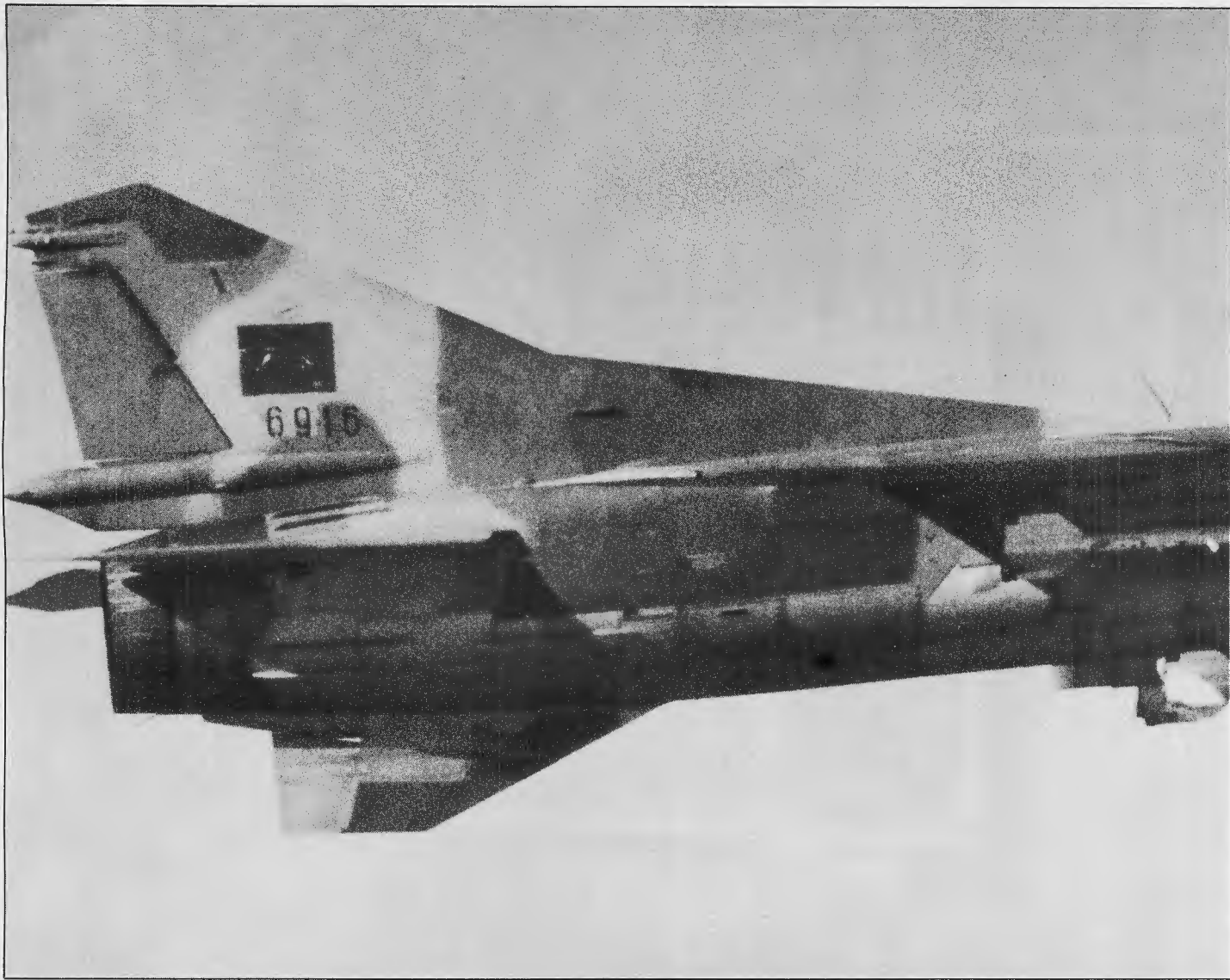
**LEFT:** Howard Sochurek at Kimpo airport with camera he used to shoot aerial sequence of 187th RCT Operation Hot Drop north of Pyongyang, North Korea.

**RIGHT:** Corporal Sherman Roach of Portland, Oregon, paints a sign over portrait of Kim Il Sung, communist premier of North Korea.





THE END



## SOF LIBYA

# IVAN'S RDF

## Khadaffi Stockpiles Soviet Arsenal

by David Segal

**L**IBYA'S Colonel Muammar el Khadaffi is synonymous with international terrorism. But the damage Khadaffi does as a terrorist godfather is minor compared to the threat posed to Libya's neighbors by his massive conventional military build-up. Indeed, U.S., Israeli and Egyptian sources say that Libya may already be a staging area for a planned Soviet intervention force in the Middle East.

"Khadaffi has turned his country into a

staging area for a large Soviet rapid deployment force (RDF), which can be used either in Africa or the Middle East," an informed, high-ranking Egyptian army officer told SOF. He agreed to be interviewed on the condition that he not be identified.

There are "definite indications that the Soviet Union has an arrangement with Libya," the Egyptian officer said, an arrangement in which the Soviets provide massive quantities of equipment to Libya on

the condition that it be made available to Soviet or Eastern Bloc forces if needed. He added that Libya already has "a significant Cuban and East German troop presence."

This thesis of pre-positioned Soviet military force was reiterated by a highly placed Egyptian official in Washington, a civilian who also requested anonymity. Remarking on Libya's enormous stockpiles of Soviet-made tanks and warplanes, he said Egypt doubts "that they are meant for the Libyans.



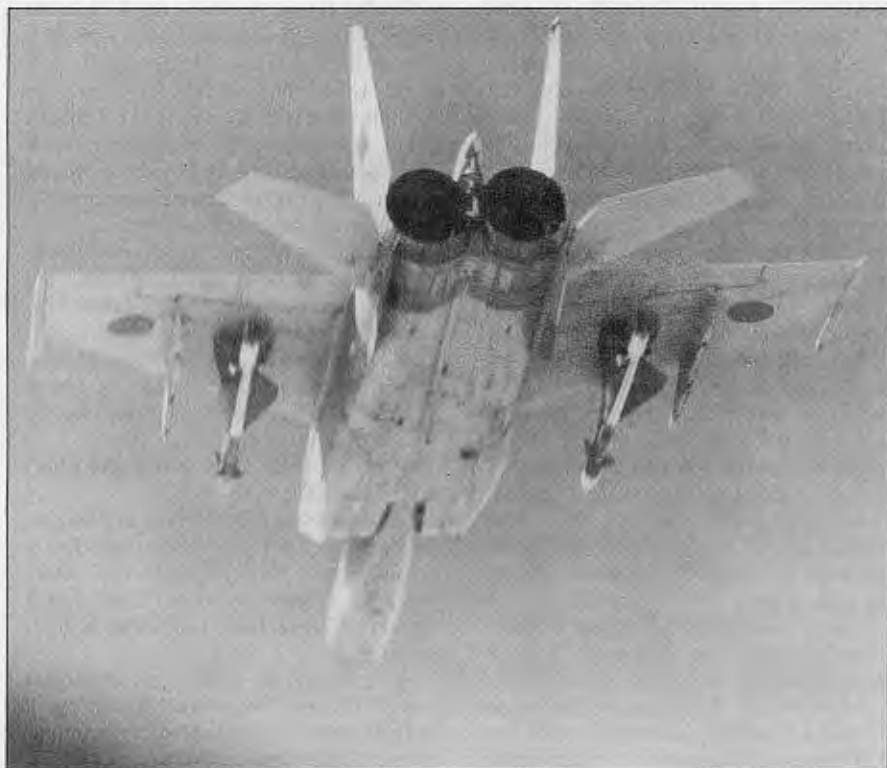
**ABOVE:** Watching the sky: A Libyan MiG-23 Flogger-E moves in close to U.S. aircraft off the Libyan coast. Photo: Dept. of Defense

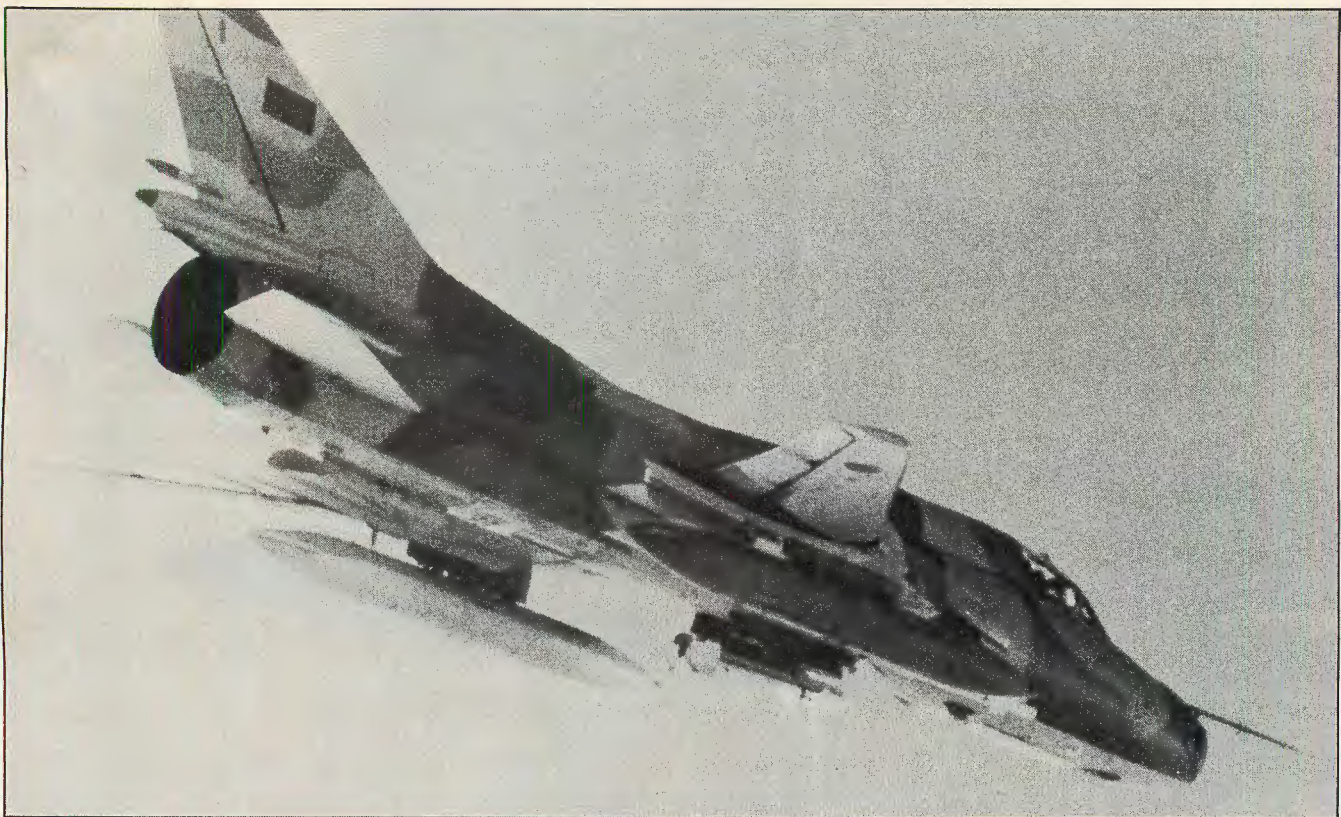
**RIGHT:** The Soviets have armed Libya with top-of-the-line aircraft like this MiG-25 Foxbat-A fighter. This Libyan aircraft is armed with two AA-6 Acrid air-to-air missiles. Photo: Dept. of Defense

We feel that Libya is being used as a staging area for the rapid deployment forces of other powers." He declined to specify who the "other powers" might be.

Egypt's apprehensions about its westerly neighbor are increased by the tacit Soviet support of Khadaffi's terrorist-support activities. In 1984, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak blamed Khadaffi for mining the approaches to the Suez Canal. And Khadaffi from the outset was a prime suspect of Egyptian intelligence in organizing the assassination of President Anwar Sadat in 1981.

The worry by Egyptians over a Libyan threat isn't baseless paranoia. The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), headquartered in London, released figures that are enough in themselves to give





Egypt's defense strategists an anxiety attack. If Libya's arms purchases met projections for 1985, the situation is even worse.

According to the IISS data, released in December 1984, Libya has 2,800 main battle tanks for its 58,000-man army (Israeli estimates put this number slightly higher). Nearly all of these are Soviet-made, most of them the same T-62 and T-72 types that serve with Soviet front-line units. This armored juggernaut overshadows both in quantity and quality Egypt's estimated 1,750 tanks, mostly T-54s and T-55s.

A prime clue to recognizing the existence of pre-positioned hardware for a Soviet RDF is Libya's absurdly low man-tank ratio. Libya has one tank for every 20 soldiers. Given the size of Khadaffi's army, it would be nearly impossible for Libya to crew, repair and support the tanks it has. Especially when one factors in that tank crewmen and mechanics require additional manpower and material support for feeding, clothing and quarters.

The Israeli army makes a useful comparison. One of its widely recognized characteristics is its low ratio of support troops to combat forces. When fully mobilized, the Israelis field about one tank for every 125 men. In the unlikely event that Libyan forces could attain the IDF's efficiency, they would still have to come up with a minimum of 305,000 additional soldiers and technicians.

That is a manpower requirement Khadaffi simply cannot meet. Over half of Libya's largely unskilled population of 3.2 million are under the age of 15. Khadaffi already is strained to maintain readiness with the 73,000 men in his combined armed forces.

**Soviet-made Su-22 Fitter-J armed with AA-2 Atoll air-to-air missiles. This Libyan interceptor was photographed during a U.S. Navy training exercise on 18 August 1981. Photo: Dept. of Defense**

With about 340,000 men in the militarily useful age group of 18-45, and only about 112,000 in the prime 18- to 25-year-old category, Libya would be very hard-put to mobilize 150,000 men even during the gravest possible emergency.

Similar figures apply to the Libyan air force. With 535 combat aircraft in its 8,500-man air force, Libya has 16 airmen for each plane, easily the lowest ratio of men to equipment in the world. If the Libyans could somehow achieve the operational efficiency of the U.S. Air Force, they would need nearly 77,000 additional airmen to fly and maintain those planes.

It is a simple fact that Libya cannot possibly use all its tanks and warplanes, and similar figures apply to armored personnel carriers, artillery and other heavy equipment. Thus the key question arises: If Khadaffi isn't using his vast stores of Soviet material, is he pre-positioning them for the Soviet Union or a ComBloc ally?

SOF's Egyptian army source and others say this is indeed the case.

"The fact that Libya serves as a staging area for the rapid deployment forces of a possible future Soviet operation is, somehow, the accepted wisdom," said Israeli diplomat Hannah Palti, now based in Jerusalem.

An Israeli army analyst put it another way: "It is not so much what Khadaffi will do that concerns us, but rather the intentions of the Soviet Union. We know that the

Egyptians are very concerned about Libya's arms build-up, and they have a right to be. I would say that, right now, except for their manpower advantage and superior combat experience, the Egyptians are not in such good shape."

The Israeli analyst cautioned that Russia's use of Libya as a staging area "makes sense, but we have no concrete evidence. There is nothing substantial we know of, such as a formal agreement or understanding, but we are sure that the Soviets' intent in supplying this arsenal of weapons to Libya is to use it for such purposes. If it weren't for that, the amount of weapons the Libyans are storing would be amusing."

He added that a Libyan-based Soviet RDF could encounter problems because "a lot of the [stored] equipment is not being properly maintained, and some of it is rusted from disuse."

Washington's assessment of the situation is nearly the same as Jerusalem's. Like the Israelis, U.S. government officials are aware of Khadaffi's massive stockpiling of Soviet arms and worry that they may be pre-positioned for use by Soviet or other communist troops.

In contrast to the Egyptian and Israeli views, however, Washington's assessments have an air of wishful thinking about them. Khadaffi's mercurial unreliability as an ally is emphasized, and Libya's shoddy maintenance of stored equipment is cited as if it proved that the appearance of a Soviet RDF in North Africa is impossible.

A State Department specialist on Libya emphasized this point. "I would be very careful of the idea that they are stockpiling for the Soviets for any kind of a forward basing option," he said. "Whereas that's



**ABOVE:** Soviet T-72 MBT clatters down the road during a Moscow military parade. This tank is imported to many Soviet client states, including Libya. Photo: Dept. of Defense

**RIGHT:** ZU-23 23mm AA guns cover Libyan skies in case of an attack by any enemy. Soviet soldiers like these are assigned to Libya as advisers. Photo: Dept. of Defense

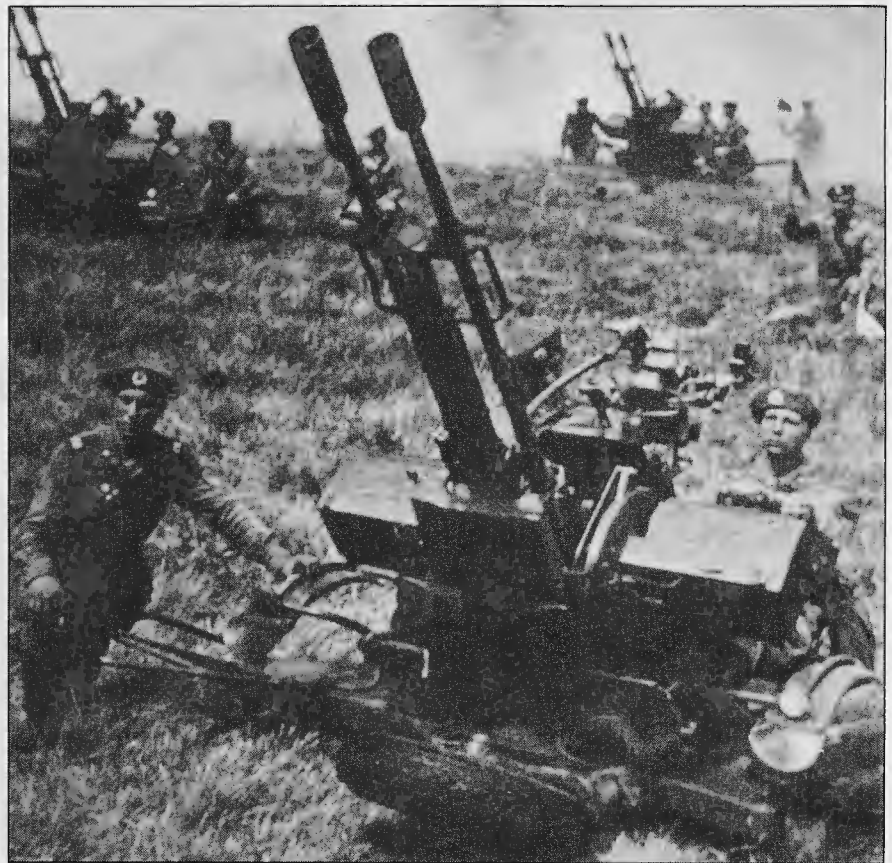
theoretically possible, the Soviets would be stupid to count on it because the equipment is in such poor shape."

It might be careless to rely too heavily on that assumption, however. Soviet equipment is built to function under very adverse conditions in the hands of unskilled soldiers. Most notably, the Soviet army is hardly recognized for its own high standards of equipment maintenance.

Another point favoring the success of a pre-positioned Soviet force in Libya is an abundance of fuel. Although fuel shortages often hampered movement in the Libyan and Egyptian deserts during World War II for Rommel's Afrika Korps and the British Eighth Army, Libya is now a major oil producer.

It is in these same deserts that any Libyan conflict with Egypt will have to be fought, with or without Soviet intervention on Khadafi's behalf. The Egyptian army is not entirely unprepared for such a contingency.

According to SOF's Egyptian army source, Egypt constantly maintains the equivalent of a reinforced armored division in forward positions as a reaction force against possible Libyan invasion. There are also numerous Egyptian light screening forces stationed along the 700-mile Egypt-Libya border. This includes a strong blocking force at the strategic Halfaya Pass, the "Hellfire Pass" of World War II armored battle fame.



"The Egyptians have legitimate concerns, of course, because Khadafi has struck at them before, and they're right there on the border. They have every reason to be concerned about the Libyan stockpiling," said the State Department spokesman.

The real question, the State Department official said, is whether Soviet intentions toward Egypt are as hostile as Libyan intentions appear to be. The massive accumulation of Soviet equipment in Libya, he said,

"only makes sense if that equipment is being stockpiled for somebody else's use. But Khadafi's actions don't always make sense."

Unfortunately for the State Department, Khadafi is only half of the equation. The other half is the Soviet Union, whose actions almost always have a purpose. The Soviets have invested a lot of time, money and effort in Libya's military build-up. It is foolish to think that they have no intention of putting that build-up to use. ✕



# HELIBORNE



## First Arty Airmobile Combat Op

# HOWITZERS



by Major George Nyfeler,  
USA (Ret.)

**M**Y war in Vietnam really started in 1963 when I went in with a Special Forces A-team, but it didn't end there. Not by a long shot, it didn't.

The first conventional American troops — elements of the 3rd Marine Division — hit the beaches in early 1965, and soldiers from the 173rd Airborne Brigade weren't far behind. I was part of the "Herd," commanding officer of Battery B, 3rd Battalion (Airborne), 319th Artillery. I didn't realize it then, but I would soon be leading the first U.S. artillery helicopter assault in Vietnam — the first of many firsts to come.

After closing into Bien Hoa in May 1965, Battery B did what all good field artillery units do when they go to work: we dug in, improved our position area, and continued to accomplish our mission as fire unit of the artillery battalion providing direct support for the 173rd. We also took care of some of those things we had wanted to do on Okinawa, but never seemed able to find the time to finish. Extra hours were spent in training for any additional mission we might be assigned — which included getting ourselves ready for any airmobile or airborne operation that might come our way.

We practiced all manner of 105mm howitzer air-transport methods . . . as if we didn't already know all about it. Field artillery had been moving guns by chopper for years albeit in peacetime maneuvers.

Butch Williamson, commanding general of the 173rd, wanted in the worst way to move his guns with his own birds. Butch's problem, though, was that he only had a platoon of B-model Hueys to do the job, and the best we could do was to drop the 105s' weight down to 4,400 pounds from the normal 5,000 by removing the front shields — a practice prevalent in all airborne artillery units.

Now, there was and is no way that a B-model Huey will lift 4,400 pounds along with a crew of two pilots, crew chief and door gunner aboard, but what the general wanted, he got. We had to break the gun into three pieces, though — the tube, wheels and lunette, and the remaining skeleton — and this required three Hueys to airlift the gun. We also still needed additional birds for the gun section personnel, ammunition and other necessities. Whatever we were going to end up doing, this wasn't it.

B Battery troops loading 105mm howitzer through CH-37's distinctive clamshell front loading doors.

In considering the alternatives, you have to remember that this was 1965 Vietnam; there were no Hooks (CH-47 Chinooks) or CH-57 Skyranes in-country. However, eight Blivets were available.

And what is a Blivet?

First, remember that the military always gives snappy names to its equipment. After the troops use it for awhile, things like M3 submachine guns become Greaseguns, M79 grenade launchers become Bloopers, and Iroquois choppers become Hueys. Well, the Sikorsky CH-37 Mojave helicopter — one of the first Army helicopters that could lift a significant weight — was no exception.

It had two radial reciprocating gasoline engines, a single five-blade main rotor, front clamshell doors to accommodate bulky loads, and a triple-redundant hydraulic system much appreciated by pilots and aircrews who often claimed, "Uncle Igor is looking out for us!"

Hooking up a load under this bird required a *big* grounding wire or a real personal disregard for a healthy jolt of static electricity. All these wonderful characteristics, plus the fact that the CH-37 shook, rattled and rolled so much that a 100-percent check of all rivets was a 25-hour maintenance inspection, earned this bird the unofficial but enduring name of Blivet.

There were eight in-country — two assigned to each of the four corps-aviation maintenance companies — and when the time came, we had six of these to lift our guns. We were glad to have them.

It didn't take long for our airmobile artillery/infantry assault to crank up. My battery was given the field artillery tactical mission of providing direct fire support (DS) for the 1st and 2nd battalions (Airborne), 503d Infantry, each hauling their own 4.2-inch mortar platoon in the field with them. My unit was the only fire unit in the airhead, and we would be supported on the ground by the brigade's cav troop and a provisional rifle company composed of administrative types. Normally called "cooks, clerks and jerks," those provisional riflemen proved themselves to be a real airborne infantry company during the next days.

And my part in in this first-time-ever artillery airmobile assault in Vietnam? Air-head Artillery Tactical Commander.

We had about two days to plan for this operation, and I was able to make an aerial recon of the landing zone (LZ) and my position area. The terrain did nothing to gladden the heart of any indirect fire unit commander, especially one being airmobiled in. It

was like one big pool table — further identified as a large rice paddy in the middle of the dry season — and it was flat, hard and dry.

I accurately predicted that the biggest problem I'd run into would be getting my guns put into the LZ at the coordinates on which they were *supposed* to be dropped. The problem with field artillery in an LZ — with no prime-mover vehicles — is a little bit different than that of the infantry: We couldn't simply pick up our rucks and rifles and move out smartly to the right location. We'd be stuck where we were dropped, and would have to recalculate our position to — as a division commander said at Normandy upon being landed on the wrong beachhead — “begin the war from here.” That's if you can determine just where “here” is. If field artillery doesn't know where it's shooting from, it sure as hell won't know where the shells will land — until some shell-shocked forward observer or infantryman tells them all about it.

Regardless of what *might* happen during the assault, we took possession of our Blivets and started working on a loading plan for the guns. Our two options were to rig external sling loads, or to open the clamshell doors and put the guns inside for the flight to the LZ. Considerations were strong for both in some respects, and just as weak in others.

Externally slung pieces would be quicker to unload, although trickier to sling and transport. They would also reduce the load capacity of each chopper due to instability during flight. A howitzer swinging from a

**B-Model Huey provided the lift capability for the 173rd in 1965. Two and a half tons of howitzer was too much to handle, so the gun was broken into three parts for aerial transport.**



## OVER HILL, OVER DALE

Without a doubt, George Nyfeler knows his way around the Army. He entered active service in 1956, cycled troops through basic as a drill sergeant, and received his commission in the field artillery through OCS at Fort Sill. After jump school and a tour in Germany, Nyfeler attended the Special Forces Officer's Course and was assigned to 1st Group on Okinawa. He led two A-teams to Vietnam in 1963-64, and transferred to the 173rd for his branch command time. He was seriously wounded in late 1965 and medically retired in 1967. Nyfeler currently works as a free-lance writer and photographer, is active in the pro-gun movement, and is an NRA high-power rifle competitor and team coach.

**Author and then-Secretary of Defense Robert Strange McNamara.**



Blivet's belly would also present a big problem in the all-too-likely event of a forced landing. Internal loads would be safer during hook-up and in-flight, permit the maximum load to be carried by each chopper and give a bit more security to the operation. Ours was the first operation of its type, and we didn't want to let Charlie see the surprise we had in store for him until we were on the ground and minutes away from getting the first rounds downrange. The internal load plan won out.

Maybe sometime, somewhere, the Army planned an airmobile assault to hit an LZ

other than at dawn, but it wasn't this time. We were up in the middle of the night, issuing basic small-arms ammo and Cs to the troops, checking loads of howitzer ammo and fuzes, getting the guns ready for pickup by our faithful Blivets, and organizing the hundred other little tasks that needed doing before we went to war. A prime consideration was making sure our fire direction center (FDC) people — the real nerve center of any fire unit — were squared away. They required a warm, dry and well-lit area in which to work — a small command-post tent in this case — while the

rest of us stayed up to our butts in mud, leeches and old C-ration cans of cheese and crackers. They also needed dependable communications, and since there's not a lot of field-telephone wire in an airhead, that meant radios.

In 1965 all we had were our VRC-9 series of vehicle-mounted radios . . . so it was off with the radio mounts, fabricate a base, attach a 24-volt power source from a 2¾-ton truck, and presto — you have a more-or-less man-portable radio system. Since the

*Continued on page 109*



**B Battery 105mm howitzer fires in support of 173rd Airborne Brigade infantry during the first Army artillery airmobile assault in Vietnam.**





## SOF KNIVES

# BUCKMASTER

## Big Blade Busts

by Bill Bagwell

**B**UCK has sold a lot of knives over the years. And their recent entry into the combat/survival arena is yet another indication of their keen awareness of the pulse of the knife-buying public. The new BuckMaster has become a marketing and advertising coup. Its design is likely the product of an in-depth market research survey, for it contains all the eye-catching features and gimmicks of the current genre of macho-image knives and more.

The BuckMaster is a "rugged multipurpose field knife" and "one that will master the toughest wilderness challenge," according to the advertising literature. A lot of SOF readers have been requesting a review of Buck's newest offering, so we purchased one from Atlanta Cutlery, Dept. SOF, Box 839, Conyers, GA 30207. The BuckMaster was subjected to SOF's standard round of tests which included cutting ability, edge holding, stress resistance and shock resistance as well as ergonomics, or user compatibility.

If you like high-tech looks and Rambo mystique, this knife is going to catch your eye and lighten your wallet to the tune of \$149. First impressions indicate that this is a knife that, if nothing else, will be extremely strong. Rumor has it that the BuckMaster is U.S. Navy SEAL issue, designed to their specs. If this is so, and if you just bought one, then you and the SEALs are in for quite a shock when you get around to putting it

into service. The flashy looks of the BuckMaster and its promotional copy promise performance as a tool, but the knife is compromised as either tool or weapon.

Technically speaking, the BuckMaster is a hollow-handled knife with a 7½-inch clip-point blade. The sawtooth-backed blade is hollow ground from ⅝-<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub>-inch-thick stainless-steel stock and is 1½ inches wide at the widest point. The knife measures 12½ inches from the tip of the point to the butt end of the handle, which is made from 1¼-<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub>-inch-diameter round steel stock. The handle provides a storage compartment ⅞-inch in diameter with a usable depth of 2½ inches. It is attached to the blade with a nut and

**BuckMaster's macho good looks and high-tech sheath have mated with an advertising blitz to produce big appeal in the paramilitary market.**



**Buck's recent offering to the survival/military market proved brittle in the torsion test and in the shock test.**

washer arrangement that engages a threaded stub of a tang approximately 1 inch long. The nut and washers are anchored with epoxy, and a threaded cap with an O-ring seal serve to make the handle compartment watertight. Both the handle and the butt cap are checkered in the interest of providing a secure grip. These are a pretty straightforward set of specifications. . . so far.

Curiously, the available storage space in the handle is filled by a pair of threaded "anchors" that are 2 inches long, excluding the threads. These screw into a threaded hole that is located on each end of the quillions of the guard. The purpose, we are told, is to enable one to attach these anchors, then attach a rope or rappelling line to a tab that screws under the butt cap. Next, you either throw the knife over a cyclone fence or attach it to the limb of a tree, and then either climb or rappel away! Honest!

The knife and sheath together are grossly overweight. The knife alone weighs 24 ounces, and the addition of the sheath brings the total weight of the package to an incredible 36 ounces (5 ounces lighter than a Beretta 93R machine pistol, with stock). To my mind, knife and sheath together are at least a full pound overweight.

Total weight is part of the consideration of user compatibility, but weight proportion and balance has a great bearing on how the knife feels and cuts. The BuckMaster carries the largest proportion of its weight in the handle — the handle and guard assembly weigh about 14 ounces — and in a knife of this type that sort of balance works against you. The weight of the knife should work for you on the chopping stroke, and not take muscle to force the blade to do its work. This knife is balanced improperly for the chop, and both user comfort and chopping capability suffer as a result.

The cutting test we administered consisted of edge holding ability, handle design, and balance. Part of the test for edge holding consists of sharpening the test blade so that it will easily shave hair from one's arm, hacking and chopping through a 2x4 pine building stud, checking for retention of a shaving edge, whittling both hard and soft wood, and attempting to sever a free-hanging 1-inch manila rope with one stroke. This is not as tough to do as it sounds; a first-rate blade will do this drill several times and still shave without resharpening.

While our exercise with the 2x4 was an eye opener in the area of uncomfortable handle design and less than thoughtful execution of the guard, we found that after cutting our way through the soft pine stud one time the BuckMaster would still shave, although not cleanly. Chopping was difficult, since the swing weight of the blade was light and required chopping motion to come from muscular effort rather than from the momentum of the blade itself.

The handle on the BuckMaster is round, and all-metal in construction. The round configuration causes the knife to want to roll in your hand, making it difficult to keep track of and control the position of the cutting edge relative to your palm. The fact that it is metal means that it is cold to the touch — and in subfreezing temperatures it will stick to your hand. This can and will happen, and when skin freezes and sticks to metal, you usually lose part of your epidermis before the parts are separated.

By the time I had managed to chop the 2x4 in half, the web between my thumb and index finger was reddened and irritated by the checkering on the handle. This was so pronounced that I had to put on a pair of gloves to finish cutting the 2x4 without causing a blister. The gloves also saved the skin on the knuckle of my index finger, because the sharp back edge of the guard ground into my finger as the knife moved in my hand in a chopping motion.

The guard on the BuckMaster is stamped out with a die from steel stock nearly a quarter-inch thick. It appears that it is blanked to shape with a die in the first step, and then another die is used to punch the slot for the tang and bend the quillions to shape in a final punching operation. There is nothing wrong with this approach and it is altogether satisfactory in production. But when a part is stamped out with a die, there is usually a slightly rounded edge on the top side of the part, and a pronounced sharp edge and sometimes a burr on the bottom side. That is precisely the case with the guard on the BuckMaster, and it wouldn't be a problem if the guard were made so that the sharp edge faced forward on the knife. Unfortunately, it isn't. The sharp edge is turned to the rear and grinds into your knuckle every time you swing the knife. The tab which forms the attachment point for your rappelling rope does the same painful thing at the rear of the handle, but the butt cap can be unscrewed and the rappelling tab reversed so that it doesn't dig in. (My BuckMaster came from the box with the drilled tab installed so it turned up toward the guard.) But there is no easy fix for the guard.

The BuckMaster's sheath is an impressive-looking example of modern industrial design, an injection molded affair that holds the knife very securely and safely in either a right- or left-handed carry. It carries a built-in sharpening stone and a pocket which contains a dandy little compass — a first-rate Silva Type 12. It is a generally good piece of work except for a couple of glitches. One is that it is fairly noisy to withdraw the knife from the sheath. There is a tension device inside the sheath that holds the knife in place, and hollow plastic amplifies the rubbing noise made as the blade is withdrawn. Not extremely loud, but it isn't too quiet, either. In addition, this sheath, like most civilian merchandise aimed at the military and paramilitary markets, has an extremely long belt loop which causes the knife to swing and bang on your leg as you walk.

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(For an update on carrying knives, see "Battle Blades" this month on page 28.)

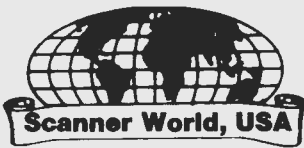
Hacking and chopping are fairly important functions of a survival knife, whether for cutting poles for litters or building a shelter. We've already mentioned that the BuckMaster is poor in this respect, because of its absence of proper swing weight and the unfortunate design of the handle and guard.

But how does it whittle? Surprisingly well for a big knife. Whittling is overlooked in many cases, but the construction of a snare, bow, spear or skewer for cooking over an open fire requires that you be able to whittle to make them.

The ability of a knife to sever one or more 1-inch ropes with one stroke is considered important in bladesmithing circles. A knife has to possess mechanical advantages which confer a blend of speed, power and cutting ability to accomplish the task. And a knife that will make this cut easily and consistently is one that is capable of killing an adversary with a properly applied single stroke, or making heavy or difficult cuts with minimum effort. The 1-inch rope cut is really a barometer reading of a knife's useful performance capabilities, and that is the reason it is included in the cutting tests. In seven attempts at cutting a single free-hanging 1-inch manila rope, the shaving-sharp BuckMaster failed to make a cut. It didn't even come close. The poor balance of the knife is partially responsible for its failure in this area of testing, but another contributing factor is the way the blade is ground. The pronounced median ridge that results from the way the blade is hollow ground causes the blade to want to hang up due to a wedging effect when an attempt is made to slice thick material such as rope or flesh.

Buck has equipped this knife with its own version of a sawtooth arrangement on the back of the blade, and has indicated that its purpose is "for cutting through ice or wood, if necessary." We did not try to saw our way through a block of ice, but like other sawtooth-backed knives we have tested, the BuckMaster fails to give anything approaching a satisfactory performance when used as a saw on wood. As questionable as the chopping performance of this knife is, it is far easier and quicker to chop a limb in two with the blade than it is to part it with the sawtooth back. This business of sawtooth on the back of a knife blade is marketplace hype, and Buck is not alone in using this type of hokum to bolster sales.

To work properly, a saw must contain several design elements. The teeth must contain what is called "set": They must be alternately offset from the plane of the blade so they do not become clogged with cuttings. In addition, the saw blade must be long enough to have a decent length of cutting stroke. Carpenters don't cut a board with a hand saw that has a stroke of less than 3 inches, and this is the length of stroke that the sawtooth section of the BuckMaster provides. The sawtooth section is not only far



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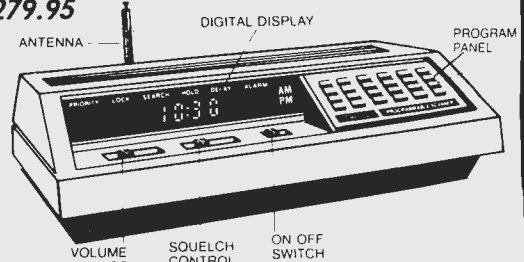
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too short to provide adequate sawing action, the sawteeth do not have the requisite set in the teeth for the saw to be functional. I am not suggesting that Buck intended for the BuckMaster to be considered as a carpenter's tool, but to expect this saw to function as much more than an ornament is asking a bit much.

The BuckMaster is also equipped with a serrated chamfer on the back of the clip which Buck indicates is to be used for cutting through rope underwater. While a good knife will easily cut a rope with one stroke, underwater operations are another story. The resistance of the water makes the task of underwater rope cutting one of a slicing or sawing nature rather than slashing or chopping. This serrated chamfer is an attempt to address this specialized cutting requirement, and is honestly not an altogether bad solution to the problem. The drawbacks are that it is a slow method of cutting the rope, and if the knife is reasonably sharp it will likely make the cut quicker by slicing than by sawing.

The incorporation of the clip point as a design element in a combat knife makes good sense. A sharpened clip point properly executed on a blade and properly used in the combat arena gives excellent penetration when used to deliver a stabbing stroke and is devastatingly effective when employed on the backstroke. It is one of the essential design elements on a properly constructed Bowie knife, and for good reason: It works. However, like most good things, there are some pitfalls in putting a clip point to work.

A clip point is potentially fragile and should not be overblown in its proportions, and neither should it be employed on a knife that may be subjected to the abuse of being used as a prying instrument or crowbar. It is highly effective when used on a specialized piece of cutlery such as a fighting knife, but there are stronger point designs available.

Buck's mistake is not that they employed the clip-point design, but that they combined it with a choice of metallurgical elements that give less than an optimum level of strength, and then weakened the clip by adding the serrations.

The first real indication that the BuckMaster might have a problem in the area of strength came from the ads run by Cold Steel in *Shotgun News* which showed photographs of a BuckMaster blade broken into several pieces. We were interested in how the BuckMaster would stack up to the SOF test.

In our bending tests, the blade was clamped in a vise and moderate hand pressure was applied. The blade gave every indication of being brittle and an inch of the point snapped off. You can usually break an inch off the end of most blades by clamping them in a vise and pulling them with your bare hands, but the way a blade breaks is the important thing. If a blade bends or yields before it breaks, it gives the user some sort of warning of impending failure. If it breaks or fails suddenly, as in the manner of a peppermint stick or glass, it is an indication that the steel or heat treatment, or both, need to be examined.

If you lose an inch off the end of your knife in a combat or survival situation, it is an aggravation and inconvenience, but it does not necessarily put you out of action or get you killed. But if the knife breaks in the middle of the blade or at the hilt, it can easily cost you your life. When we administered our test for shock to the BuckMaster, the failure was instantaneous and dramatic. Our test BuckMaster cleanly snapped just behind the guard, leaving only a handle in my hand. The test consisted of striking the back of the blade smartly on the horn of an anvil, a centuries-old test for shock employed to test combat blades by bladesmiths. Any good combat or survival knife should pass it.

The nature of the failure of the blade of the BuckMaster indicates that the blade is not suitable for combat. To be fair, Buck does not actually say that this is a combat or fighting knife. They refer to it as "a knife that will master the toughest wilderness challenge." However, it is boxed and packaged in a manner that suggests military use. There is no denying a military association in the advertising approach, and Buck has said that the knife was designed for SEAL team use. If it is aimed at the military, it should stand up to the rigors of combat. As the BuckMaster is currently manufactured, there are too many serious questions that arise concerning its strength for it to be considered a combat knife.

If looks and visual impressions alone were the key to delivering performance in the field, the BuckMaster would be a run-

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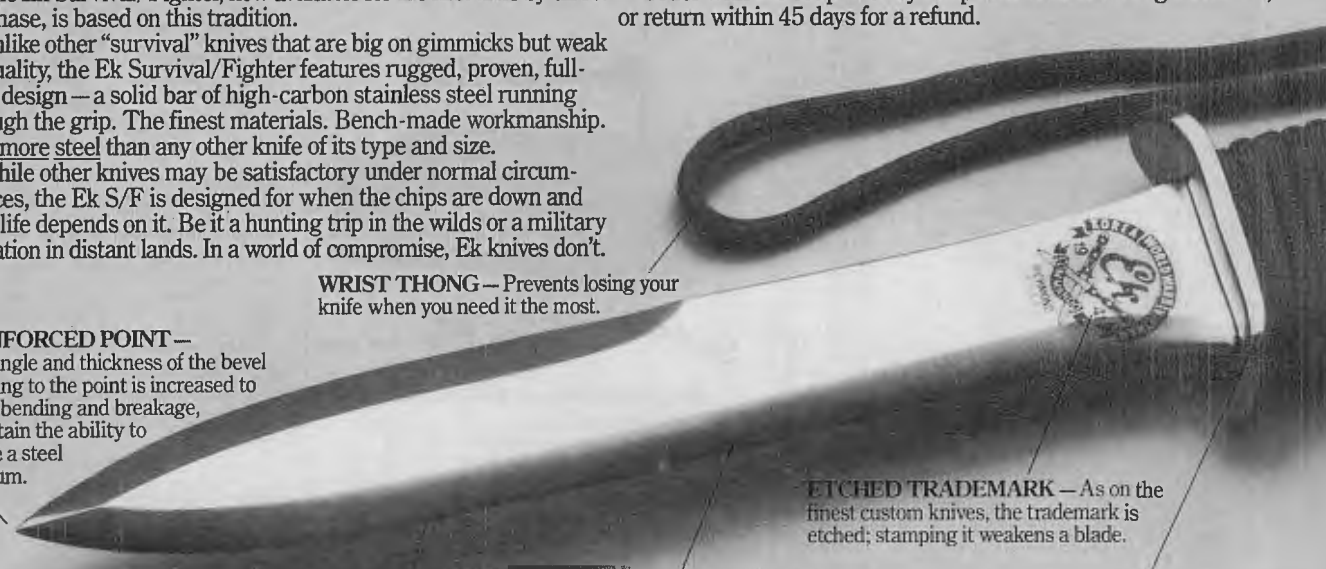
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away winner. Unfortunately, while the BuckMaster looks as if it will deliver the goods, its promise of performance is an empty one. If your projected wilderness challenge involves having to build a shelter or litter or anything that requires excessive chopping or hacking, be prepared for a high expenditure of energy and effort. In addition to expending unnecessary calories and energy in a survival situation, you will also end up with a really sore hand, and if all this involves cold weather you will be in dire straits if you're not wearing gloves.

Buck has spent time and money in bringing this knife to the marketplace. Coming from Buck, it is a great disappointment, for in the past they have delivered far more. ❧

## AIRBORNE INTO KOREA

*Continued from page 72*

being over. The enemy seemed to have put up only token resistance. War, however, is a great contradiction as I found when I returned to the command post that evening.

Three men stood in the afterglow of an early sunset, part of Item Company who had met the remnants of the North Korean army some six miles south of Sukchon. Ronald H. Boivin, a BAR man from Pawtucket, Rhode Island, Private

Harold Hendershaw, rifleman, from Lake Hiawatha, New Jersey, and Corporal Paul Rivera, a bazooka gunner from Chicago, Illinois, all had a story to tell. These men claimed they were the sole survivors in each of their respective squads. They had been ambushed in a rice paddy in the town of Sunjun that afternoon. Thirty-seven men from the company had reformed without officers and returned to their regimental command post. They lost contact with their supporting companies and without ammunition and equipment they had few alternatives. The story was told by First Sergeant Clifford S. Strebe of Rochester, Indiana:

"We were moving down a railroad track leading south toward Pyongyang. 1st Platoon was on top of the railroad track, 2nd Platoon was on our right flank off about 300 yards working its way through the rice paddy. The 3rd Platoon was on the left flank. We blew a railroad tunnel, went over the top of the ridge above it and advanced toward the town of Sunjun. The railroad was about 1,900 yards to our right, the town was above us about 300 feet, we were in a hole surrounded by small hills and some peaks which rose about 500 feet above us. They let us get into this hole and then opened up. We thought our flank was protected by our supporting company. At one time I saw 300 gooks running toward me. I took off and a burp gun outlined my boot as I ran. I went back over the

ridge where we had blown the tunnel and regrouped. Thirty-seven of us made our way back."

Up until the time I left the regiment I could not determine the total losses that Item Company suffered in the Sunjun ambush. I did know that for many of these youngsters it was their first taste of war and therefore their casualties could have been overestimated.

Sunday, 22 October, at a little after noon I joined the supply convoy that was moving over an unpatrolled road from Sukchon to Sunchon. My mission was to determine the whereabouts of the prisoners of war that had been reported in the Sunchon area. We arrived about 1600 and as we drove into the command post of the 2nd Battalion of the 187th Airborne, I met Chaplain James A. Skelton of Hannibal, Missouri. He had just returned from the town of Myonguchan where he had buried 75 American POWs. Two men who accompanied him were holding all the earthly remains of these American dead — they filled two helmets with small packets of paper-wrapped personal items.

Chaplain Skelton told of how on the night of Friday 12 October, evidently only hours after the airborne had jumped, the POWs were herded from their prison train and separated into groups of 15. Then under the pretext of being fed, they were led to separate areas in the vicinity of Myonguchan, blindfolded and shot. Of the 75 corpses he was able to positively

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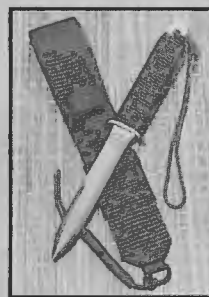
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identify only 29. He claimed many of the bodies wore as many as three dog tags on a single corpse. He told of the 20 men who escaped this murder train and how they were hardly able to stand because of the months of mistreatment. One of the men who survived, upon seeing Chaplain Skelton, said, "Chaplain, we are glad you're here; let's have a prayer."

I returned that night to Sukchon and spent the evening discussing with Col. Bowen the success of Operation Hot Drop. Bowen said that he considered it an ideal use of airborne troops, but that because of the fast movement of the ground support units, their role could have been more effective had they dropped farther north. He agreed with my disappointment that the airborne had not jumped a day sooner and possibly prevented the death of the 75 American POWs. Colonel Bowen claimed that, regardless of other considerations, his newly completed mission had been necessary for morale. He had also proved the practicality of airdropping heavy equipment. In just two days, Friday and Saturday, he had airdropped 4,064 men, 40 jeeps, 12 105mm howitzers, four 90mm anti-tank guns and over 140 tons of rations, ammo and miscellaneous supplies.

The jump had been the last trump in MacArthur's heavy hand. But it wouldn't be long before the enemy played a powerful new trump — the Red China card. It changed the whole game. ✕

## COLOMBIA SITREP

*Continued from page 62*

policy in the region. And that shouldn't be hard. Like other countries in Latin America, the Colombians have asked for no United States troops. They just want the tools to finish the job.

### WHO'S WHO IN THE REVOLUTION

The Colombian insurgency has taken many curious and deadly turns since the founding of the Communist Party of Colombia in 1929. Today, the various groups have branched out into a complex web of guerrilla units, most of them with their own ideologies and affiliations. And as in the case of most communist insurgencies, you can't tell the players in this deadly game without a program.

#### Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC), Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces

FARC is the military arm of the Communist Party of Colombia (PCC). The PCC was a radical but essentially harmless political party in Colombia until about 1960 when they embarked on an "auto-defense" plan to protect themselves against persecution by the Colombian authorities and other political parties. Given the violent history of Colom-

bian politics this may have been a legitimate concern, but the real purpose was to form a guerrilla unit to initiate the classic "prolonged struggle" of communist insurgency. The unit was formed around the nucleus of an infamous bandit band operating in Colombia's eastern mountains and augmented by trainers schooled in the USSR. In 1964, FARC set up their first in-country training school for guerrillas and their first general staff was formed.

FARC is the most well-organized, well-equipped and entrenched of all Colombia's insurgent movements. They have been active as guerrillas for over 25 years and are in no hurry. They display tactical cunning, enjoy an excellent intelligence network and have an uncanny grasp of the complex political process in Latin America. FARC managed to negotiate a favorable "peace treaty" with the Belisario administration in 1984 which essentially allows them to develop their strength in areas that they control, without government interference.

They have also developed a political party, the Patriotic Union (UP), which they violently established in the rural areas and through which they plan to penetrate the government. While able to apply "divide and conquer" methods toward the noncommunist parties, they also back up these political skills with battlefield proficiency.

Estimates of FARC's troop strength vary, but it is a safe bet that they could

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muster 10,000 men and women under arms on short notice. Their full-time forces number about 4,000 with another 10,000 auxiliaries in support. FARC divides its forces into *frentes*, or fronts, of 100 to 200 guerrillas. There are currently 24 fronts located in strategic areas around Colombia with most of their strength concentrated in the eastern mountains. Although outnumbered, FARC, through coordinated action on all of their fronts, could put the Colombian armed forces in a precarious position.

FARC, like the other guerrilla groups, finances its activities through extortion and kidnaping, but the main source of its income is from the drug trade.

#### FARC — Ricardo Franco

Named for a fallen guerrilla, the Ricardo Franco (RF) faction is a unit of FARC which broke with its parent organization when the 1984 peace treaty was negotiated. The RF feels that there is no point to a treaty and has vowed to carry on the armed struggle. When the treaty was signed, the then-treasurer of FARC took about 450 men — and the treasury — with him to continue guerrilla warfare against the Colombian armed forces. The RF is primarily an urban guerrilla unit, with seven urban and two rural fronts.

While the mainline FARC and the RF

have their differences, they are still coordinated. One confirmation of this is that there are *comandantes* in both units with the surname of Pizarro. These men are brothers and have been photographed together since the FARC-RF rift. In recent months, however, the RF has been working more closely with M-19.

#### Ejército Popular de Revolución (EPR), Popular Revolutionary Army

While FARC traces its lineage directly from the 1929 establishment of the Colombian Communist Party, and is fashioned after the Soviet model, the EPR actually got its start in 1962 when the Maoist brand of communism took root. These communists formed their "people's army" in 1967 on the Atlantic coast of Colombia.

The EPR has about 1,500 men under arms, organized into six urban and rural fronts, with three more projected. Their strength lies primarily in the western mountains of the country. The EPR insists on maintaining a Maoist-style military machinery with no organized rank structure. This has been costly in effectiveness over political and military issues, and the assassination of one of their top leaders, Ernesto Calvo, in 1985 has dealt them a severe blow.

It must be noted that the EPR is serious about their desire to maintain

"pure" Marxist-Leninist ideology. When their previous mentor, communist China, opened itself to the West in the early 1970s, the EPR turned to Albania, whom they perceive as maintaining the true Marxist-Leninist orientation.

The EPR has infiltrated some of its members into FARC, and a little ideological disagreement in July of 1985 between FARC and EPR resulted in 30 guerrillas killed and more wounded.

#### Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN), National Liberation Army

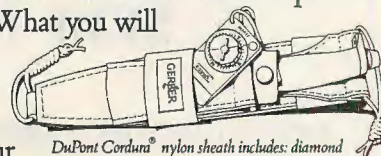
This unit proudly proclaims itself to be a product of the Cuban revolution and makes no secret of its direct ties to Havana. ELN political doctrine differs from that of FARC and EPR units in that ELN calls for the immediate overthrow of the Colombian government. The ELN is not a believer in the theory of prolonged struggle — they want their *current* leadership to take the reins of government.

The ELN leadership was formed from a group of radical students who went to Cuba soon after the communists took power there. Many of the original members supplemented their training by fighting alongside the Cubans during the Bay of Pigs invasion. After they had been molded by the Cubans into an efficient guerrilla unit, the Colombians were sent back home to continue the struggle.

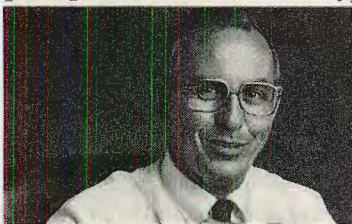
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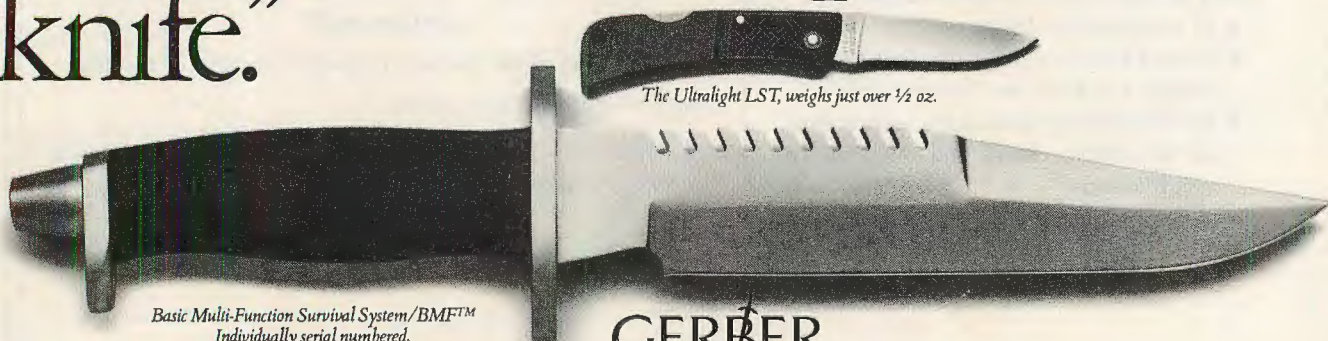
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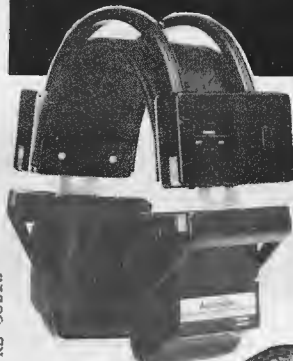
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The ELN has approximately 1,000 people under arms, organized into six rural and five urban fronts. They hope to create — through terrorism, guerrilla warfare and disruption of the economy and political process — conditions for nationwide violent insurrection, which they hope to direct. Their sources of income are also the drug trade and extortion.

**Movimiento 19 de Abril (M-19), April 19th Movement**

Usually referred to as M-19, this is the latest — and most bizarre — of the guerrilla groups plaguing Colombia today. The group is characterized by and remembered for its violent acts geared toward gaining maximum media attention in the foreign and domestic press. Many of their activities, such as the seizure of foreign embassies in Bogotá, or more recently, the seizure and burning of the Palace of Justice in the same city seem to be calculated media events. In their manipulation of the media M-19 is far more sophisticated than the other groups.

The onset of M-19 stems from events in Colombia in 1974 when the military briefly took over the government. Taking the opportunity offered by instability, a group of radical students boldly announced the formation of M-19 in 1974 by taking out large ads in the Colombian papers, stating: "Here comes the M-19!"

Perhaps because of the attention that they attracted, M-19 was practically wiped out in 1980 when the military and police agencies, acting in concert, raided M-19 strongholds and incarcerated most of its membership. Some members managed to escape, however, and reformed primarily as a military unit.

M-19 is currently organized into nine regional fronts (the formation of a new front in the Bogotá municipal area was recently confirmed by M-19 officials) numbering from 1,500 to 2,000 combatants. This group enjoys support among leftist student and intellectual groups, but seems isolated from the rural population.

The ideology of M-19 is hard to pin down. They characterize themselves as having the support of the populace and state as their goal the destruction of the Colombian political (constitutional) and military systems. Highly placed Colombian intelligence sources have described the movement as "not knowing what it wants" while others have compared them to national socialists.

But whatever the political philosophy of M-19, they are no strangers to the strictly communist guerrilla movements. When the group was in its infancy, the Colombian Communist Party dispatched FARC members to train the new M-19 in guerrilla warfare.

M-19 is international in character with offices in most European capitals, many Central American and South American countries and in the United States where they publish an English-language newspaper out of New York. It should be noted that the unit of M-19 which stormed the Palace of Justice received training in Libya and then returned to Colombia to launch their terrorist attack.

Captured M-19 documents reveal that they want a revolutionary government in Colombia by the end of this year and to help achieve this they have instructed their leadership to "maintain the appearance of democracy."

**Quentin Lame Group**

This splinter of M-19 is an attempt to channel the frustrations of some of Colombia's indigenous tribes into armed revolutionary activity. Numbering about 200 combatants, this unit has the potential to become popular with Colombia's Indians if they are properly propagandized. Currently, however, they are small in number and controlled by M-19. ✕

**AFGHAN AMBUSH**

*Continued from page 45*

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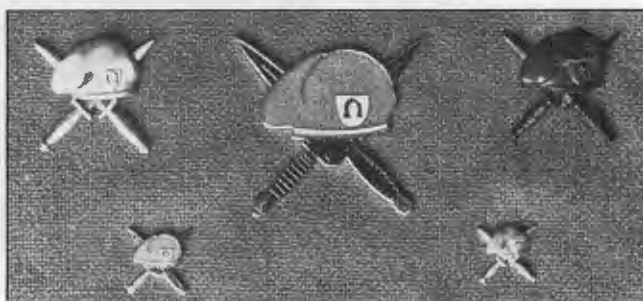
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Our first obstacle was the track — if you could call it that — leading from the mountain clinic to the Kandahar road. It was a miserable little trail that camels could handle, but which promised hell on wheels to anything else. That fact didn't seem to bother our driver as he slammed over ruts, rocks and boulders alike. The Dodge held up pretty well, but we were getting beaten to death.

After three painful hours we reached the Kandahar road. It's given a class-A surface rating in Afghanistan, but in the United States wouldn't rate much above mud track. Although 18 of us were still jammed into the back of the Dodge, the ride did get a little better and we made slow but steady progress toward the south.

About an hour after dusk we pulled off to the side of the road and stopped. An English-speaking native told us some locals had reported that a helicopter had landed, dropped off some troops and flown back to Kandahar. Our escorting mujahideen were undecided, and chose to wait until more traffic came by in order to question the occupants.

It's interesting to note that the muj typically travel at night with their lights on, in vehicles distinctly different in silhouette from civilian transport trucks — and with their weapons openly displayed. Why they don't button up and travel during the day, and attempt to blend in with ordinary civilian traffic, is beyond me. I never did get a good answer to that question.

After another hour's wait a civilian truck going north came by and the muj questioned the driver. His answer obviously created no problem since everyone lightened up, re-boarded and headed south. About 15 minutes later, around 2300, we were cruising down the road when the shit hit the fan. Flares popped and night became day. I glanced up and dozens of tracers streamed by just over my head while endless strings of firecrackers seemed to pop around us. It was a freeze-frame moment in which time stood still, but the attack probably lasted only two to three seconds.

One of the journalists yelled, "Get off the truck!" I'd been holding an Afghan's AK-47, and I kept it as I dived headfirst over the tailgate and onto the deck. On impact I moved into the shadow of the truck — an exceptionally clever move for which I deserve no credit since I was just reacting rather than thinking. I started low-crawling at a high rate, just as I was taught 15 years ago at Quantico, all the while cradling the AK. I remember seeing one other guy running in the "shoot me . . . shoot me" half-crouch position off to my right, and the un-Christian thought that he might draw some attention away from me crossed my mind.

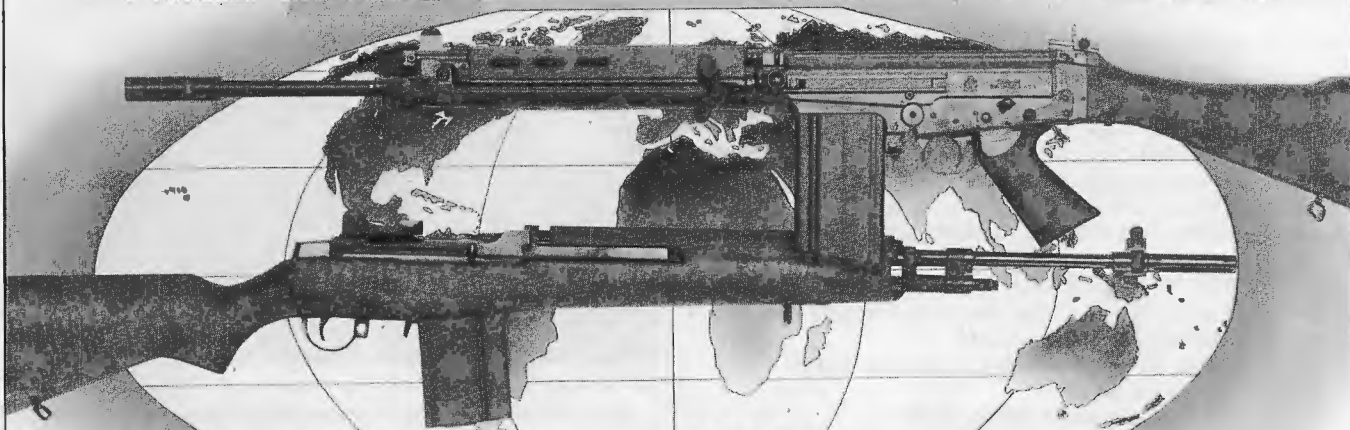
To be honest, I was convinced I was dead meat. Flares still popped, rounds cracked incessantly, and tracers streaked past, hitting just in front of me and ricocheting into the air — but I decided to keep moving until

my number came up. After covering some 200 meters in record time I started angling left for some folds in the ground. I found a mujahid whose primary personality trait had been the constant use of hashish, but he turned out canny, blitzed or not. We ran together, generally south, trying to stay in defilade and dropping and freezing as flares popped over us. Ambushers — most likely the Soviets — continued to hose the kill zone with automatic weapons fire and I could hear the blooperlike pop/crash of a grenade launcher. We kept moving south and found two more Afghans, one shot in the left calf but still humping.

As we moved away from the ambush site, we could still see the glow of the kill zone and a sudden bright glare as if something, probably the Dodge, blew up. A klick farther south we crossed back over the road and started moving northward, keeping several ridgelines between us and the road. When we were parallel to the glow of the ambush site, we heard helicopters whopping into the area.

I'd used up a lot of luck in the ambush, and was distinctly unhappy with this new development. I was familiar with the night vision devices available to our forces, and figured the Soviets had bought, developed — or stolen — the same sort of gear. We didn't have much cover when the choppers closed in. They were running without lights and were absolutely invisible; all we could hear were rotor noises which sounded like

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they were directly over us. A shower of sparks 200-300 meters overhead suddenly illuminated the desert, and thinking they were flares, I hit the deck — not bothering to look up until I heard repeated explosions some distance off. I looked up to see a second shower of sparks from another helicopter, and watched perhaps two dozen red spots streak through the air as the gunships rocketed the kill zone, occasionally adding bursts of cannon fire. I got up and started moving out, figuring either they didn't give a shit about me, couldn't see me, or were afraid of "overs" into their people. As we moved off, the choppers made six passes, hammering the kill zone and then leisurely flying off.

We continued moving but the wounded mujahid's leg was giving out. We stopped to rest him and I took his AK and ammo. The enemy then had what seemed to be a "mad moment," using every available weapon to pound the kill zone one last time. We made about another 500 meters when we found two more Afghans, one unhurt and holding the other who had bullet wounds through both arms and fragmentation wounds to the chest. He couldn't walk and we tried carrying him in a blanket, but it was a no-go — we were just too exhausted. Two mujahideen left to get help while Hash-head and I stayed with the wounded.

About 20 minutes later they returned with a local and a donkey. One wounded went on the donkey, Hash-head carried the other, and I staggered along with the AK and ammo. Local mujahideen hid us when we got to their village, and we picked up two more muj stragglers. The next night we returned to the camp we had left just 24 hours before.

Two days later I heard that one journalist

and another two mujahideen were safe in the south. The other American journalist and six mujahideen never made it out of the kill zone.

*Moughan and his party spent the next week hiding from Soviet and Afghan army search parties. Another vehicle was finally obtained, and they continued their journey down the Kandahar road toward Pakistan. At dusk the second day, two Hind helicopters swooped down on them and made three gun runs — raking the area with cannon and machine gun fire. Moughan and the others escaped unscathed, and finally reached the safety of Pakistani territory.*

— The Editors ✂

## COMPACT COLTS

*Continued from page 37*

through all but the most highly tuned target pistols. But they moved reliably up the feed ramp and slowly (703 fps average) down the Officer's ACP barrel. At 880 fps, Winchester's famed 185-gr. Silvertip hollowpoint was the hottest load tested. It remains the preferred cartridge for serious social purposes.

All of the above ammunition will produce 1.5- to 2-inch groups at 25 feet when fired offhand from the modified Weaver stance, more than acceptable for the intended purposes. As expected, muzzle whip was somewhat more severe than experienced with a Colt Government Model. But felt recoil remains almost the same. The grip portion of the frame is adequate for everyone, except those with extremely large hands. This is a fine extension of a design that proved itself in the real world. Sug-

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gested retail price of this version is \$569.95. Spare six-round stainless-steel magazines are available for \$18 each.

An even more surprising entry in the Colt stable is the new Mustang .380 ACP pistol. While the Czechs have played a cruel joke on their clients with the introduction of the CZ 83 ("CZ 83," SOF, February '86), which is as large as many of the new compact 9x19mm pistols, Colt has correctly moved in the opposite direction. The all-steel Mustang weighs 18.5 ounces, empty. This is just 7 ounces more than the alloy-framed Walther TPH. With an overall length of 5.6 inches, the Mustang comes within 2 inches of competitive pistols in .22 LR/.25 ACP. Overall height is 3.96 inches and width is close to 1 1/2 inches. It's a true pocket pistol. When we compromise stopping power to gain concealment, we should expect an even tradeoff. The .380 ACP chambering is marginal at best. It makes no sense to carry a pistol in this caliber unless it offers the ultimate in concealment. Colt's Mustang is an ideal hideaway or back-up pistol.

The concept is further enhanced by the Mustang's locked breech design. Most pistols in this caliber operate by the principle of unlocked blowback. Relatively low-powered, .380 ACP pistols do not require a locked breech system to operate safely. The Mustang is short-recoil operated and its locking system has been modified from the Browning Model 1935 (HiPower) and

Swiss SIG P210. A single lug on top of the barrel fits into a corresponding recess in the slide when the pistol is in battery. A barrel nose, which is part of the barrel forging, is slotted and retained by the slide stop pin. This is a slight improvement over the swinging link and pin used on the Colt M1911A1 series. As the slide moves rearward, the barrel is forced downward and unlocked by the slide stop pin. During blowback operation, all of the recoil momentum is available to drive the reciprocating parts rearward. If these components have a low mass, the felt recoil will be high, and some .380 ACP pistols have nasty recoil characteristics. A portion of the Mustang's recoil momentum is absorbed in unlocking the barrel from the slide. As a consequence, felt recoil is moderated considerably. Another plus for the Mustang.

Both the frame and slide are mill-finished investment castings, the only such in Colt's product line. All the steel parts, except the hammer and springs, are black-oxide finished. The fixed front sight is integral with the slide casting. The square-notch rear sight can be adjusted for windage zero only by drifting it in the slide's dovetail. No colored polka dots dance before the eyes. The sight radius is 3.93 inches.

There is no grip safety, but the half-cock notch remains. A manual thumb safety is mounted to the frame which can be engaged and disengaged with ease. It also has a firing pin lock, but it operates in the re-

verse sense as that found on Series 80 pistols. Again, a hole inside the slide, in this instance on the left side, contains a firing pin block plunger which is held in place by the firing pin. The plunger's spring is located under the rear sight. The pistol's pivoting, hook-shaped ejector, mounted in the frame, operates the mechanism. When the trigger is pulled, the trigger bar presses against the bottom of the spring-loaded ejector, which then rotates forward on its axis pin into position to expel the empty case out of the slide's ejection port. As the ejector rolls forward it releases its upward pressure on the firing pin block plunger permitting the plunger's spring to drive it downward and free the firing pin to travel forward and strike the primer. When the trigger is released, the ejector rotates up once more to depress the firing pin block plunger and prevent the firing pin from moving ahead.

The frame's grip tang is long enough to prevent the rounded spur hammer from taking part of your anatomy. That's good news. The grooved trigger is not. If you're trigger sensitive you will not appreciate its scratchy 6.5-pound pull weight. But on pistols of this type, I guess you have to learn to live with it.

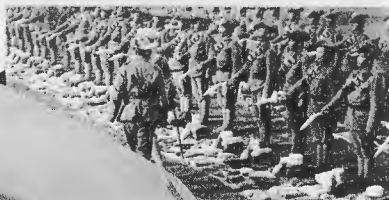
The six-groove barrel has a left-hand twist and a length of only 2.73 inches. There is no barrel bushing and it mates directly to the slide. This is not a match pistol.

The twin recoil springs (one inside the

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other) and their plastic guide rod and metal washer sit in a hollow in the slide below the barrel in the manner of the Browning HiPower. The guide rod's head rests against a flat spot on the barrel nose.

A single-line box magazine is provided and it holds only five rounds. With a round in the chamber, this still equals the capacity of any snub-nose revolver, in a far more concealable envelope. Of all-steel construction, the magazine has a fixed floorplate and sheet-metal follower. The magazine release button is right where it belongs, aft of the trigger on the left side of the frame. Checkered black plastic grip panels are threaded directly to the frame without bushings.

Colt's instruction manuals are poorly written, stressing safety features with little information on the weapon itself. The Mustang is properly disassembled and assembled in the following manner. Remove the magazine and clear the pistol. Cock the hammer and pull the slide to the rear until the slide stop's lug indexes with the slide's disassembly notch. Withdraw the slide stop. Push the slide forward and off the frame. Compress the recoil springs and guide rod. Lift them up and out of the slide. Withdraw the barrel from the rear. Simple.

The fun starts when you try to reassemble everything in the reverse order. When handling the frame, be careful you do not press down too far on the spring-loaded ejector as it may reverse itself and become lodged

against the top of the sear spring. If this happens remove the grip panels, turn the pistol upside-down, insert a screwdriver through the magazine well and press against the top of the sear spring until the ejector comes free and returns to its proper position. Before you install the barrel, you must first insert the recoil springs and guide rod (don't forget the small washer). Completely compress these components into their hollow in the slide. Then insert the barrel. This maneuver can be tricky. Everything else follows in reverse order.

In their anxiety to obtain advanced publicity of new products, firearms manufacturers will all too often send preproduction prototypes to gun writers. It's a calculated gamble. It usually pays off.

But sometimes it doesn't and this time Colt sent me a lemon. Test-firing the specimen sent to us produced a chain of disasters that commenced after only 25 rounds had been sent down the barrel. First the rear sight slipped out of its dovetail and fell to the ground. Attempting to reinsert it caused the firing pin block plunger spring to fly off into the Arizona desert. The immediate result was constant failure of the plunger to drop down after the ejector rolled forward. Thus the firing pin could not move forward and the hammer had to be continually recocked by hand. This irritation was compounded when the slide stop spring popped out of its recess in the frame and inhibited

the slide stop's movement. Failures to feed, failures to extract and failures to hold open after the last round was fired were the results. After struggling through several hundred rounds, I also noted that the slide seemed to be improperly heat treated since both its disassembly notch and slide stop notch were severely peened.

Subsequent to our initial test, we were sent a production-series specimen. All the deficiencies were corrected. In fact, out of a production run of 5,000 Mustangs — 80 percent of which have now been sold — Colt reports a return rate much lower than the industry average.

Four different types of .380 ACP ammunition were fired and chronographed through our two Colt Mustangs. Two full metal jacketed (FMJ) loadings were used. Both African Musgrave and Philippine (headstamp: SB 85) cartridges, both with 95-grain projectiles, averaged 884 and 889 fps, respectively, in muzzle velocity. With a standard deviation of only 14 fps, the Philippine ammunition was the most consistent of all the .380 ACP cartridges tested. Frontier jacketed hollowpoints (JHP) pushed out at only a slightly lower 816 fps. Winchester's 85-gr. Silvertip hollowpoint cartridge produced the highest average velocity at 924 fps. We need all the help we can get in this caliber, and if your pistol will reliably feed Silvertips, I recommend them.

Our initial tribulations aside, the Mus-

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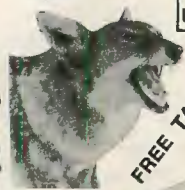
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tang created a favorable impression. Muzzle whip and felt recoil are both held to a minimum by the locked breech action in spite of the fact that only two fingers can wrap around the minuscule frame below the trigger guard. Accuracy potential is acceptable given the pistol's intended function as an extremely close-range belly gun. At 10 feet you will have no trouble in dumping the entire magazine into a 2-inch circle.

Suggested retail price for the Colt Mustang is \$340.50. Spare magazines cost \$10.75 each. While I've returned the prototype, I'm keeping the production-series specimen. I will not hesitate to carry it anywhere. For further information about Colt's compact pistols, contact Colt's marketing manager, Robert C. Platkin (Colt Industries, Firearms Division, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 1868, Hartford, CT 06101).

## M14

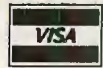
Continued from page 67

aftermarket magazines. They cannot be trusted. Armscorp rifles and kits are all equipped with original M14 magazines. Twenty-round magazines seem to offer the best capacity for 7.62x51mm NATO infantry rifles. I have used 30-round magazines in both the FAL and G3 and found them to be too heavy and clumsy when the rifle is fired off the shoulder.

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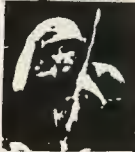
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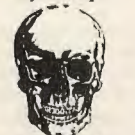
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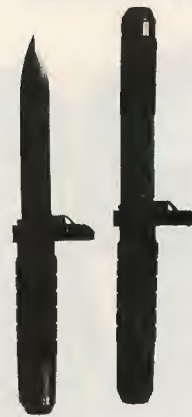


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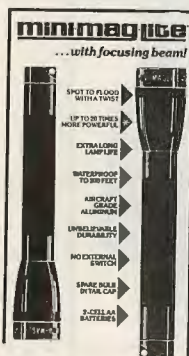
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The M14 is classically clothed in American walnut. Hideous chocolate brown fiber glass stocks were an item of issue for a brief time and today they can be found at any local gun show for \$4. A plastic handguard is the M14's only condescension to the ugliness of modern reality. The aluminum buttplate has a hinged steel shoulder strap. A compartment in the stock stores the combination tool, chamber and bore brushes, lubricant container and five-piece cleaning rod. Sling swivels are attached to the bottom of the stock. They belong on the top. The rear sling swivel is fixed, like that found on the M16. An M1 Garand web sling is standard issue.

Numerous accessories are available for the M14 and a few are quite useful, such as the M2 bipod. Sturdy, but a bit too heavy, it clamps onto the gas cylinder and gas cylinder lock. Its five-position adjustable legs offer a command height from 9½ to 13 inches. These bipods are no longer common, but can be located at gun shows for \$85 to \$125. Original M2 bipods are all marked "U.S. BIPOD RIFLE M2" and carry the stock number 7790688.

An even more uncommon accessory is the M14A1's muzzle stabilizer. This assembly consists of a perforated steel sleeve which slides over the flash suppressor and is fastened to the bayonet lug by a screw and locknut. Designed for the M14A1, a pathetic and totally unsuccessful attempt to transform this weapon into a squad automatic, it moderates felt recoil somewhat and reduces muzzle climb. When it can be located this muzzle device commands \$135 and more. The original carries the stock number 7791661 but I have seen several unmarked replicas.

Those of you who plan to wreak some real havoc on the firing range will be pleased to note that Armscorp can provide you with the M76 grenade launcher for \$49.95 and its sight system for \$24.95. The blank-firing adapter for home movie makers is available for \$8.95. Original magazines can be ordered at four for \$27.95 and the combination tool for \$3.95. There are also winter trigger and safety kits and M6 bayonets floating around the local flea markets.

Disassembly of the semiautomatic versions of the M14 do not exactly follow the procedures outlined in FM 23-8. Clear the rifle. Grasp the rear of the trigger guard and pull away and toward the muzzle at the same time. No tool is required since this is much easier to accomplish than with the M1 Garand. Withdraw the trigger mechanism. Separate the barreled receiver from the stock. With the bolt forward, push the recoil spring toward the muzzle to relieve pressure on the connector lock. Use the roll pin on the connector lock to draw the lock away from the guide rod. Holding the recoil spring under control, withdraw it and the guide rod from the operating handle's hollow interior. Pull back on the retracting handle until the op rod's rear lug mates with the disassembly slot toward the end of the rod's runway in the receiver. Pull the oper-

ating rod up and out. It can then be separated from the receiver. Hold the bolt by its roller and lift it out of the receiver.

U.S. Army manuals indicate the gas system should not be disassembled as long as the piston slides freely within the cylinder. Pure claptrap. Use the box wrench on the end of the combo tool to remove the gas plug. Tilt the muzzle downward and withdraw the piston. Unscrew the gas cylinder lock by hand and slide the lock and cylinder forward until the barrel's gas vent is exposed. Pull the front barrel band toward the front sight. Slide the handguard forward and separate it from the barrel.

After cleaning, lubricate the bolt roller and operating rod slot on the receiver with PARR (G96 will do nicely for the other components) and reassemble in the reverse order. Do not lubricate the gas system. Do not snap the handguard in place. Align the rear band with the slots in the barrel and slide the handguard rearward. Install the piston with its flat side to the barrel and open end to the muzzle.

Whatever its failings as an infantry rifle, most M14s are accurate rifles right off the racks without modification of any kind. Stuffed with proper ammo, these rifles should shoot two to three MOA all week long. Our test specimen, with H&R barrel and TRW bolt and trigger mechanism, was no exception. West German surplus ammunition headstamped IWK 19-65 was used exclusively during SOF's test and evaluation. Produced by Industrie Werke Karlsruhe (formerly DWM) in 1965 and sealed in 200-round green plastic "battle packs," this ammunition is Berdan primed, but noncorrosive. Its lead-cored, boattail bullet weighs 145 grains. The propellant is a round-ball type and nominal charge is 44 grains. It quickly gained a reputation for high accuracy potential when it was imported several years ago, and with good cause, since it consistently turned in two MOA groups with one at an astounding ¾ MOA — and this with iron sights. High-power military shooters prefer so-called "Mexican Match" ammo which is nothing more than the M118 match cartridge with its original 173-grain projectile replaced with a 168-grain Sierra match bullet.

Any experienced shooter should have no trouble handling the M14's felt recoil. No stoppages occurred during the test, and when properly maintained the M14 serves well under range conditions. But at 10.1 pounds with a loaded magazine, this 44.3-inch clodhopper is, by today's standards, simply too heavy and clumsy to stand in the trenches. Its 7.62x51mm NATO cartridge is marvelous for sniper rifles and general purpose machine guns, but a disaster in a modern "assault" rifle because it robs us of selective-fire capability.

In addition to the kit, Armscorp also sells assembled semiautomatic M14s with the Smith receiver for \$674.95 retail with a used stock and \$744.95 with a new walnut stock. I suggest those unfamiliar with capstan wrenches and barrel vises buy these

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## BULLETS & BEANS

Continued from page 53

rifles, RPGs, 60mm mortars, M60 machine guns, .50-caliber machine guns, M16s, AR-15s. We anticipated the subversive Final Offensive and destroyed it before it could begin. Our blow hurt the subversives a lot: it left their infrastructure in confusion. They still have not recovered from this defeat. This explains a lot about why they are in the weak conditions they now find themselves."

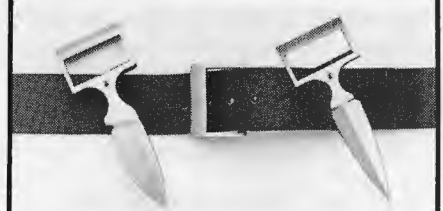
Although the guerrillas had suffered a devastating setback, they were still a threat. A majority of Guatemala's population (half of which is Indian) live in grinding poverty with little or no education and are vulnerable to communist propaganda about the utopia joining the "revolution" would bring. While it may be impossible to gauge exactly how much of the population sympathized with the insurgents in the early 1980s, it appeared widespread. Many peasants, out of fear or sympathy, collaborated with the rebels. The armed forces responded to this by employing special operations, psyops, civic action and political reforms.

Referring to the province of Chimaltenango, which was violently contested at the beginning of 1982, a Guatemalan major wrote, "Because the enemy had been working with the masses in this area, it was very difficult to make contact with the guerrilla forces. Due to the enemy's infiltration within the population it appeared that the only way to get close to the enemy was through 'mock guerrilla tactics.'"

The result was Operation Xibalba: the most successful special operation in Central America, according to many military observers. Fifteen Guatemalan commandos, pretending to be guerrillas, infiltrated a hard-core rebel combat unit and annihilated it, killing 30 Gs and capturing a cache of automatic rifles. The operation was accomplished with no government casualties. Operation Xibalba is the most sparkling of many successful army special ops which have kept the guerrillas on the defensive.

Events continue to tip the balance of power in favor of the armed forces. In the summer of 1985, commandos hiding behind sacks of beans atop a

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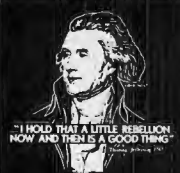


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crowded civilian bus wiped out a guerrilla unit which had set up a highway roadblock in the vast northern province of Petén. According to officers at Petén's regional headquarters in Poptún, in just a few minutes of gunfire seven guerrillas were killed and two wounded. Only one soldier was killed.

"There were no casualties among the civilian passengers," said a lieutenant colonel. "They were glad the army saved them from a terrorist shakedown. Since that operation, the incidents of the terrorists stopping highway traffic have been few here. The guerrillas don't know in which vehicles there will be soldiers."

In addition to killing guerrillas, the government realized the need to win hearts and minds. By 1982 the military government had begun to address the causes of why people become guerrillas. On 23 March of that year, retired General Efraín Ríos Montt took power from General Romeo Lucas García in a bloodless coup inspired and carried out by young middle-level officers who were concerned about government corruption and a lack of governmental focus on the basic needs of Guatemala's impoverished populace. The fervent born-again Christian led a crusade called Victory '82 that fought not only communism, but also the corruption, right-wing death squads, hunger and alienation which communism takes advantage of.

Ríos Montt dismissed hundreds of agents from a police investigative branch with a notorious reputation for brutality and he created special military tribunals that tried common criminal cases as well as those involving acts of terrorism.

But perhaps Ríos Montt's greatest contribution was "Rifles and Beans," a combination workfare/civil defense program which awarded campesinos food and money for building schools, houses, hospitals and roads. The government also issued carbines and bolt-action rifles to help defend their villages against guerrilla attack.

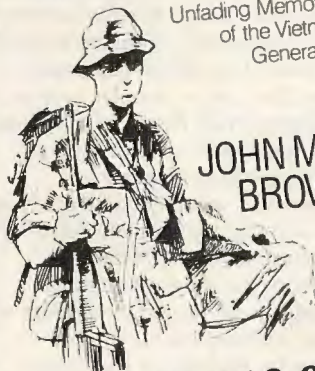
Guatemala has long had civil defense, but thanks in large part to Ríos Montt's Rifles and Beans, today it counts on a force of some 900,000 men and women, according to the Ministry of Information.

"The guerrillas have damned the population and caused a lot of damage," said Mariano Calderón, the middle-aged civil defense commander of the small town of Las Cruces in the department of Petén. "We have to defend ourselves. Thank God our government has thought of civil defense. The day civil defense leaves Guatemala will be sad. We do not want Guatemala to be another Nicaragua, another Cuba."

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## 1986 SOLDIER OF FORTUNE CONVENTION & COMBAT WEAPONS MILITARY EXPO

*Soldier of Fortune* will hold its seventh annual convention and Combat Weapons Military Expo 17-21 September at the Sahara Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas. Full details will appear in the May issue of SOF.

For convention registration information call Bill Brooks, 919-392-2961. For Combat Weapons Expo '86 exhibitor information call Ralph Bicknell, 303-449-3750.

Montt put heavy emphasis on psyops. In the spirit of their proselytizing president, specially trained troops visited the most remote villages attending to the needs of their inhabitants and educating them about the pitfalls of communism. But many Guatemalans do not need to be convinced of communist barbarity; they have suffered personally from it.

Rios Montt's policies undercut guerrilla efforts to galvanize popular support. By the start of 1983, the guerrillas had enough trouble keeping their own supporters, let alone trying to recruit more. Rios Montt capitalized on the guerrillas' loss of popular support by declaring on 23 March of that year, the first anniversary of his coming to power, a year-long amnesty for insurgents who would turn themselves in to government authorities. According to a spokesman of the Ministry of Information, hundreds of guerrilla combatants have turned themselves in since the amnesty decree and its extension by Rios Montt's successor. More important, says the spokesman, 33,593 Guatemalans who once sought refuge from the war in guerrilla-influenced territory and 14,129 of the estimated 40,000 to 90,000 Guatemalans who fled to Mexico have returned to pacified villages under government control.

Despite his success, Rios Montt was "relieved" of his command on 8 August 1983 in a coup d'état. He had mixed too much of his austere Protestant religion with state affairs in this predominantly Catholic country. However, some say the main reason for his removal was because he had stepped on too many toes while eliminating many of the fringe benefits for military personnel.

The new chief of state, Oscar Humberto Mejía Victores, previously Rios Montt's minister of defense, vigorously built on his old boss's legacy of Rifles and Beans, presiding over the construction of dozens of model villages, known as Poles of Development, which have provided thousands of Indian peasants with electricity, potable water and decent housing for the first time. But Mejía's most heralded achievement has been allowing the return of civilian democratic rule.

"The army's job is not to govern," said Mejía to SOF last November in his office in the national palace. "It is to defend the country and serve the people."

Last 3 November nearly 1.7 million voters, approximately 70 percent of the Guatemalan electorate, went to the polls to elect legislative representatives and decide which two presidential candidates would go head to head in a run-off election one month later. On 8

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December, Christian Democrat Vinicio Cerezo was elected president by a whopping two-to-one margin. The 42-year-old lawyer became the first civilian president in Guatemala in 16 years and the second since 1954.

The free elections dealt a severe political blow to the guerrillas, giving the lie to propaganda claiming that poor Guatemalans had no say in their own government. Moreover, with the new civilian government, Guatemala is eligible for a \$10 million credit from the American government for nonlethal military purchases in the United States, according to a fact sheet provided by the American Embassy in Guatemala City.

Today the guerrillas are on the run. According to Guatemalan intelligence sources, the communists can only muster about 1,500 combatants and rebel activity has been limited to infrequent ambushes, assassinations and sabotage. The lowered intensity of the insurgency is reflected in fewer government casualties. According to figures cited by Jeane Kirkpatrick in a recent article published by *The Los Angeles Times* syndicate, there were over 3,000 people killed in political violence (including combat) in 1982. That figure dropped to less than 1,000 between January and September of 1985.

The guerrillas have a tough enough time simply trying to survive. But as long as they find refuge in Mexico it will be hard for Central America's newest democratic country to kill, capture or turn every guerrilla. Mexico has vociferously protested when Guatemalan troops, losing track of their northern border in the mountainous jungle, have strayed into Mexico in hot pursuit of the guerrillas.

The Mexican authorities deny giving support or refuge to Guatemala's guerrillas, but many guerrilla defectors admit to having used Mexico as a sanctuary from pursuing Guatemalan troops.

"We would evacuate our wounded to Mexico and take rest there," said Marlene Calderón, 18, who joined the Rebel Armed Forces (FAR) guerrilla faction in 1983, but defected to the government in February 1985 when she discovered that the guerrillas had executed her husband for his intention to desert from their ranks. "We'd have our collaborators among both the refugees from Guatemala and the Mexicans. They'd send us things like food, clothes, hammocks and boots. It would go to Benemerito de las Americas (a Mexican border village) and we'd bring it across the Usumacinta [River] to La Técnica in Guatemala. Weapons would also come to us through Mexico. In 1983 we received three shipments. They would include

between 15 and 30 M16s, AR-15s or Galils. I do not know if we received any weapons later. But in 1984 I became the radio operator for the Superior Force (the FAR high command) and communicated with Pablo Monsato (FAR's first among equals), who was in Nicaragua, to get the times and locations for the pickups of resupply coming from Mexico."

The small black-haired young woman with dark Indian features who is now an army nurse at the Military Zone 23 in Poptún, Petén, also told of five Mexicans and Argentines who were training the guerrillas in Guatemala. "They would train our forces," she said. "But they would not fight that much. I met two: an Argentine who was called Armando and a Mexican who was called Tadeo."

Despite efforts by the communist bloc and their fellow travelers to bolster the rebels, the guerrilla movement shows no signs of recovering the strength it once commanded in the early 1980s. Yet the armed forces maintain the pressure on the communists.

The biggest problem for Guatemala today, as for most Third World countries, is the economy. Guatemala has been in a recession for the last five years. The combined rate of unemployment and underemployment is around 40 percent, according to figures provided by the U.S. embassy in Guatemala. However, with the coming of democracy and social tranquility, there are hopes that the tourist industry, hard-hit by the insurgency, will make a comeback to the thriving days of the late 1970s.

The threat of communism in Guatemala is not what it was a few short years ago. Hard work and sacrifice among Guatemala's people and their steadfast will to take the path of democracy have made the struggle against the guerrillas a textbook case of effective counterinsurgency in Central America. But the fight must go on. Perhaps Colonel Pablo Nuila Hub, commander of Military Zone 23 in Petén, best summed it up.

"This is the time to hit the communists the hardest. Do not give them a moment of rest or they may come back." ❧

## FULL AUTO

*Continued from page 22*

although its usefulness is questionable and it's far too complicated.

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at the bolt's rear. At the other end, the recoil spring twists into a steel stop disk that mates with the receiver's end cap. The rear sling swivel is attached to the end cap and does not rotate. A nickel-chromed spring hook on the front of the leather sling attaches to one of the vent holes on the front of the receiver.

The trigger-housing group contains some tricky features, since the trigger serves as a fire-selector. There are two crescent-shaped finger grooves on the plastic trigger. The trigger mechanism is best operated by placing a finger in each groove. If you pull only on the bottom groove the disconnector will disengage from the sear the moment the bolt starts forward and semiautomatic fire will result. When the upper groove is pulled back as well, the trigger pivots so that the disconnector cannot disengage from the sear and full-auto fire is achieved.

The black plastic, one-piece pistol grip has longitudinal grooves on either side and is correctly shaped to provide a comfortable grip-to-frame angle. A large cross-bolt safety is located in the center of the grip, near the top. When pushed to the right by the thumb of the firing hand, a red mark indicates the "fire" position. Pushed to the left, impossible without shifting the grip, the cross-bolt blocks the sear whether the bolt is open or closed. In the "safe" position the bolt cannot be retracted to the rear.

A fixed ejector has been milled into the rear of the magazine well which is attached to the front of the trigger housing. The feed ramp is cut into the front of the magazine well. Since the serial number has been placed on the left side of the magazine well, the trigger housing/magazine well has been classified as the "lower receiver" or "frame" by the BATF. The magazine catch release button, at the rear of the magazine well on the left side, must be operated by the support hand. If it were placed on the right side, it could easily be reached by either of the two trigger fingers.

Two-position feed, all-steel magazines of three capacities — 20, 30 and 40 rounds — are supposedly available for this submachine gun. I have never seen a 40-round magazine for the Z-62/63 series and I have never seen a submachine box magazine in capacity greater than 36 rounds that functioned reliably in any submachine gun. The problem seems to be in spring technology. No one has ever designed a follower spring that will consistently apply the required pressure against cartridges in a large-capacity staggered box-type magazine.

Disassembly of the Z-62/63 presents no problem once the gun's minor idiosyncrasies are understood. First remove the magazine, clear the weapon

and move the bolt forward under control. Use the nose of a cartridge to depress the recoil spring's rear stop disk until it clears the receiver's end cap. Rotate the end cap in either direction until it clears the retaining lugs on the end of the receiver tube. Remove the end cap carefully. Pull the retracting handle to the rear and withdraw the recoil spring components and bolt. Unfold the stock. Drive out the retaining pin which holds the trigger housing to the receiver tube. Pull back on the trigger housing and swing it down, away from the receiver. Grasp the barrel at the muzzle, rotate it clockwise until its fins clear the receiver's front cap sprockets and let it slide out the rear of the receiver. Reassemble in the reverse order. When inserting the barrel, line up the cut on its rear face for the feed ramp with the receiver's interrupted guide rib so it can be moved forward. After it's in place, rotate the barrel until the hole in its rear face is aligned with the retracting rod.

Spanish submachine guns deserve Spanish ammunition. Right? Wrong. We fired over 1,000 rounds through our Z-63 test specimen. Much of it was Spanish surplus ammo purchased at local gun shows. Two different lots are available, both manufactured in 1952. Ammunition headstamped FNT (Fábrica Nacional de Toledo), a bit on the slow side, will function through everything from your Browning HiPower to a Sten. Specifications for 9mm Parabellum call for an overall length of .750-inch. The second lot, headstamped PS (Pirotecnia Militar de Sevilla) is at least .005-inch too long. It cannot even be loaded into most submachine gun or pistol magazines and when it can be, you're looking at trouble. Combined with the Z-63's floating firing pin, these cartridges fired out of battery every time, severely bulging the cases at their base. Stay away from this garbage.

Nevertheless, there were no stoppages outside of one double-feed, and the Z-63 cranked out bulged and normal empty cases without a bobble and with no apparent damage to the gun. Using two fingers, fire control is excellent, and consistent two-shot bursts are possible by even the rankest of amateurs. The accuracy potential and hit probability are both of the highest order. The barrel jacket stayed cool no matter how long the gun was fired. The grip-to-frame angle is just right. Handling characteristics and balance are perfect.

I would not hesitate to take this weapon into those few scenarios that still favor the submachine gun. It's a pity the Z-62/63 series (Z-70 after cosmetic modifications) has never seen widespread use, except by the Spanish armed forces. It was followed

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briefly by the Z-70/B which has a three-position fire-selector/safety, flared magazine well, pivoting magazine catch release, and auto-safety sear. The Z-70/B has been replaced by the Z-83. It resembles the Steyr MPi 69/81; the magazine well lies within the pistol grip and the receiver is rectangular. Star's designers have effectively combined proven concepts with startling innovations to produce an interesting — if sometimes too complicated — line of submachine guns. ✕

## COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

Continued from page 24

patrol immediately comes up on line — automatic weapons flanking the patrol leader so he can control their fire — and opens up on targets that can be seen. The idea here is shock action: Once you've got the enemy off balance, keep him that way through aggressive movement into the contact, and by firing accurately. Keep up the pressure by continuing with an on-line assault, or by using fire and movement/maneuver, until opposition has terminated.

In a luckier situation, you might be just as close to the enemy patrol but they fail to pick you out of the woodline. Freeze! If you start bopping around, trying to get into a hasty ambush position, you'll lose the critical element of surprise and a good opportunity will be lost. It now becomes a judgment call for the PL. From your present position, you want as many of your guns — especially your automatic weapons — to bear on as many of the enemy as possible before opening up. If your patrol's strung out behind you in single file, there's no sense in popping off a round when the enemy patrol may be able to return a broadside. Bide your time, wait for the best moment, and then cut loose.

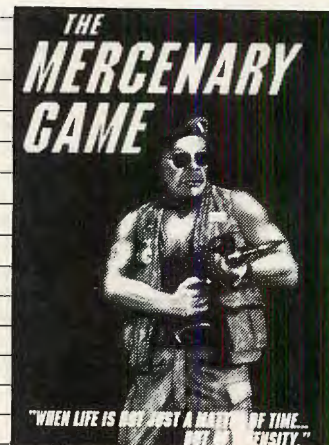
Troops should open fire as soon as they've got a target or if they're spotted by the enemy; your automatic weapons should start laying down suppressive fire while the patrol moves up on line. Then? Attack! Aggressively move into the contact, develop on the element of surprise, and grind the bastards down.

An even better opportunity arises when you spot the enemy patrol from a distance and they're moving your way. You've now got time to develop a hasty ambush, and any ambush is one of the most effective tactics of small-unit combat.

Using hand and arms signals, halt the patrol, indicate "enemy seen" (a

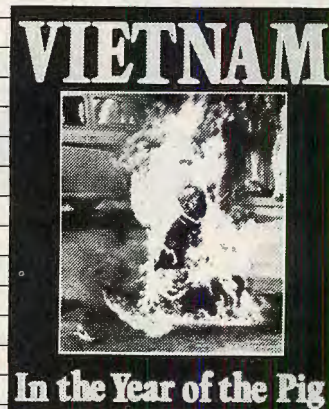
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thumbs-down was the norm in Rhodesia), and silently position the troops into a linear-type ambush position. A good line-up, from left to right, could be: rifleman, machine-gunner, rifleman, patrol leader, rifleman (facing to the rear for security), rifleman, machine-gunner and rifleman. Guns should always be sited on the flanks in order to provide crossing enfilade fire into the selected killing zone (KZ).

Now you wait. The opposition probably won't walk right through your KZ, and you'll have to determine the best time to open up so that most of your fire will be effective. With a well-aimed first shot — hopefully taking down one of the enemy machine-gunners — the PL initiates the ambush and the patrol follows suit. Follow-up drills will either consist of a sweep through the KZ, or a simple fade-away into the bushes.

There will come a time, however, when the tables are turned and you end up on the wrong side of an ambush. I've been through a couple, and it's one of the most frightening and disorienting experiences imaginable.

Your first priority is to get out of the killing zone! The name implies what it's supposed to be, and it's been set up to produce maximum casualties on your side. Troops caught in the KZ have to return as much fire as they can and immediately unass the AO if they expect to see the next sunrise. Patrol members not under direct fire from the ambush need to maneuver to the enemy's ambush flank and organize their own assault — breaking up the 'bush and taking the pressure off their buddies.

If the entire patrol is caught in the KZ, the same initial steps apply. Return fire, pop smoke or white phos to provide a screen, and get the hell out of the KZ. When your guns are clear, have them lay down heavy suppressive fire into the enemy's position while you organize what's left of the patrol into a counterattack force, or withdraw from the area.

If the bad guys are smart they're going to pick a KZ that's wide open, offers no cover, and leaves your ass hanging in the breeze. That leaves you with one, and only one, option: attack. It may sound suicidal to charge a prepared ambush position, but your other choices consist of dying in the killing zone, or getting shot in the back while you try to dash 30 meters to the nearest cover.

Enemy troops, no matter whose they are, will be thrown off balance by an aggressive counterattack. All you need is that one- or two-second delay in enemy fire and you just might come out of it with your skin intact. At any rate, your odds are far better than they would be rolling around in somebody's KZ.

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As any combat vet — whether he's a Marine island-hopper from World War II or a Spetsnaz survivor from Afghanistan — will attest, it's constant training and rehearsals that make IADs work. Reactions have to be instinctive and actions aggressive, or it'll be your dog tags that end up as somebody's war souvenir. ✕

## BATTLE BLADES

*Continued from page 28*

drawn, the tension of the belt continues to hold the sheath in place. The carry is comfortable and secure, and I have been carrying my knife in this manner for nearly 15 years.

This sheath offers versatility, comfort and the option of concealment. The knife does not swing free, and by eliminating the belt loop as the point of attachment to the belt, the portion of the knife that hangs below the belt line is decreased by a good 5 inches. A man 5 feet 10 inches in height can carry a knife that has a blade 9¾ inches long totally concealed by using this arrangement. This is achieved by inserting the sheath inside your trousers. It is worn on the hip where you carry your wallet, and the bulge of your wallet effectively conceals the point bulge of the sheath. The handle rides in the natural hollow of the back just over the kidneys, and is concealed by the natural drape of your shirt, sweater or coat.

As far as military operations go, it might make sense to carry a knife in this manner. When you attach a sheath to your web gear you are back to square one as far as a swinging, irritating knife is concerned. Too, you can become separated from your web gear. By carrying the knife through your belt next to your body you ensure its presence as long as you are wearing your pants.

Your survival knife is the knife you have with you when you find yourself in dire need of one. Whether you are on a military patrol or are just going to the corner convenience store, if you elect to carry a knife, carry the best that you have. Don't buy a front line piece of equipment and then rely on a less effective item when you suddenly find yourself caught up in an emergency. You can carry a lot more knife than you might imagine if you go about it in the right manner. Get the right sheath and carry your blade of choice, not circumstance.

*SOF reminds its readers that they and they alone are responsible for inquiry into and observance of all laws pertaining to weapons use and carry.* ✕

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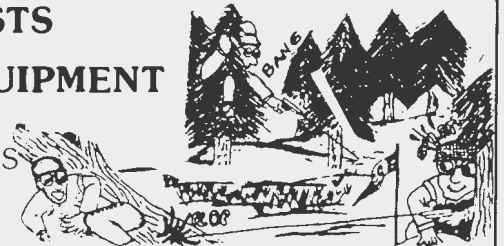
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## TASK FORCE PANCASAN

Continued from page 43

Six representatives of the group arrived the following day. We learned that they were draft evaders from Chontales who had gone east some months previously in an attempt to locate a rumored FDN camp in Zelaya. Being too far south, they could not find it. They still got a warm welcome from the local *campesinos*, who immediately 'adopted' them, offering them food, shelter and a protective screen of *correos*. One of the boys, whose nom de guerre was Golondrina, told me with obvious emotion: "All the people here are helping us, and they told us that even if there were 500 of us instead of just 19, they would go without food themselves to feed us."

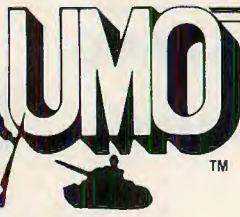
This small group of young *campesinos* was in fact a *chilote*, and the Pancasan had come face to face with its own history.

In Nicaragua stories abound of the *chilotes*, the original anti-Sandinista resistance groups comprised of former Sandinista guerrillas and ordinary *campesinos*, who began armed resistance shortly after the victory of the revolution in July 1979, when the totalitarian nature of Sandinismo became apparent. Operating in the hills in bands of 10 to 20, they gradually won the support of *campesinos* disillusioned with the Marxist course of the revolution. They eventually merged with the former National Guardsmen who were then active in the far north of Nicaragua. Thus the Nicaraguan Democratic Force was born, with the CIA in the role of prescient midwife.

Golondrina's men were welcomed into the fold with open arms. They asked to remain where they were rather than join a roving FDN task force. Recognizing the opportunity to open an FDN branch office, this request was approved. Rifles and ammunition were left to supplement the weapons the *chilote* had captured from the Sandinistas.

As we neared the TF Pancasan's patrol base, the overcast skies began unloading their seasonal burden. This slows activity in Nicaragua's civil war, but it takes more than a few inches of rain to quench thirst for liberty. As I prepared for my return to Honduras and North America, Dumas and his men rested. But Comandante Dumas was already talking with great expectation of his next foray into the heart of Nicaragua, hoping this time to lead 1,300 men instead of 350.

As I began my muddy up-and-down trudge toward the mountainous border, I was diverted briefly by a certain widow in the Jorge Salazar's controlled zone who bid me farewell and a safe journey.



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Her sentiments echoed the desires of poor, struggling farm families all around her: "We place our hopes first in God, then in the contras." ✕

## HELIBORNE HOWITZERS

Continued from page 81

antenna was still on the truck, we took along a ground plane RC 292 mast-mounted antenna instead. We had the best communications in the entire brigade airhead, but then that's the way it always was. We didn't keep saying, "shoot/move/communicate," back at Fort Sill for nothing.

When everything was ready to go — at least as far as I could tell — we headed down to the departure airfield. We lifted off from Bien Hoa just prior to dawn on 25 August 1965 for a 30-minute flight to the LZ.

Vietnam at dawn in 1965 was a beautiful place. We left the twin smells of burning JP-4 jet fuel and a less-than-effective sewer system behind, and the green blanket of grasses, bamboo, forest and jungle hid Charlie and the Cyclo B girls. As morning began to blow the night's darkness away, the sky marched through purple, pink and orange before finally settling into the typical deep blue of another full day.

Battery personnel in the assault Hueys were positioned as per normal echelon for a field artillery battery displacement. The advance recon party and I flew in the lead lift; recon included one man from each gun section who would use marker panels to guide that individual Blivet into position so that each gun would be unloaded at the exact firing point. There were also men from the XO's (executive officer) firing command post (CP), armed with an aiming circle to lay the battery for immediate firing upon landing as well as FDC troops who would calculate initial firing data. The latter were critical: The guns had to register on a known point in order to confirm the location of battery center, and I had attached an aerial FO (forward observer) aloft in an L-19 to support this task.

The operation looks like a Chinese fire drill, but it works amazingly well when everyone knows what he's supposed to do. Our Blivets were following up in a later lift to deliver the guns after battery personnel were on the ground and the position area organized. On top of this seemingly disorganized crew was one very reluctant Vietnamese interpreter.

We started closing up on our LZ, and from my favorite seat in the slick — starboard door with feet on the skids — I could look ahead and see the Air Force F-100s completing their prep of the LZ and surrounding area. The napalm had pretty well burned off, and the warbirds were giving the tree lines hell with their 20mm cannons. Those armed with 500-pound bombs were

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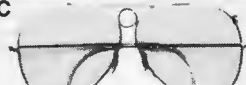


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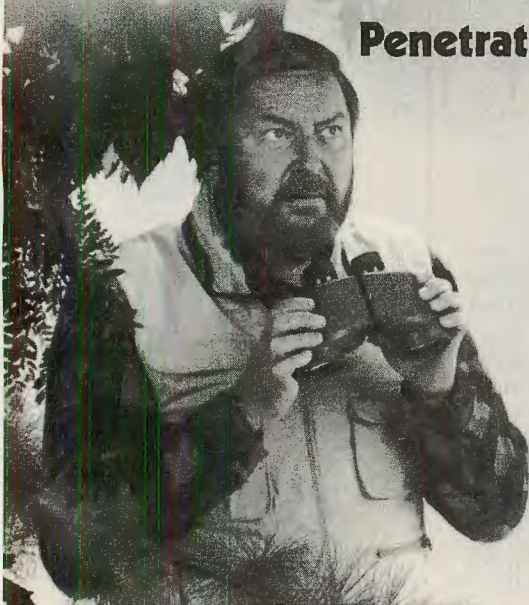
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expending them on what might have been suspected VC locations. F-100s pulled up and temporarily out of sight as the first lift of Hueys charged in over the trees, each door gunner massaging the LZ floor with the ball/tracer mix of 7.62mm linked ammo from their M60s. Our tranquil sunrise scene was gone, but the morning had still lost none of its beauty.

We were braced for anything when we touched down on the LZ, but it turned out to be a cold one. There was no cracking green AK-47 tracer to ruin our day; no one complained about that. The troops headed for tree-line assembly areas to regroup while more were lifted in, and then moved out to their assigned objectives.

I took a look at the map and my fears of an improper insertion were confirmed by about a thousand meters, but Battery B could still carry out its mission from that location. Like the good general at Normandy, we began the war from where we landed.

Gun section representatives were out with their panels, the FDC computer was given revised battery center data, and the XO's rep began to orient his aiming circle in preparation for the arrival of the guns. Like so many airborne elephants dwarfing the escorting gunships (armed B-model Hueys at that stage of the war), the Blivets materialized in the distance above the tree line.

Although their normal job up to that time was recovering downed aircraft, the Blivets performed like champs and guns were quickly disgorged. They lumbered off to continue with search and recovery, and were replaced by the F-100s who gave us a low pass over the LZ in a tight formation and then went home for breakfast. With ease of practice the battery was laid on the azimuth to support the infantry, and the troops prepared to fire in support of their mission.

Battery B had an SOP "hot list" of three things to get done when occupying a position: First, ready the guns for fire, which included set-up of the FDC and the XO's CP; second, build a wall of sandbags around each gun and the FDC, and finally, have each man dig his own foxhole from which to fight if we came under ground attack. I made sure these were accomplished with dispatch, and from the Purple Hearts I didn't issue, it was pretty much a good idea.

I'd also picked up a few other good ideas along the way, one coming from a crotchety old light colonel, Scott Olson, who had served with the Americal Division in the Pacific in World War II. He was a leg and mean as hell, but he was a soldier. He told me that every unit which patrolled around its position at night was left alone by the Japanese. Those who felt they were secure enough to hop into the rack sooner or later got overrun, and greased, as they were cutting Zs. Olson's advice had served me well during two earlier Special Forces tours in Vietnam, and I continued to apply it in the field artillery. It served me just as well in 'Nam as it did Olson in the South Pacific.

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people — troops, NCOs and junior officers — we didn't have any good stories of bloody hand-to-hand fighting in the dark in the middle of the rice paddy, defending the guns and firing in support of the infantry. What we did do was our job: firing when and where the infantry wanted our 105mm rounds downrange.

One enemy we couldn't overcome was the weather. We had hit the LZ in the dry season, but it turned out to be the last day of the dry season. As every gun chief quickly found out, there's no high ground in a rice paddy where you can set up to keep out of the mud and water. But as experienced NCOs, they all managed to find ways to keep their guns, ammo, equipment, troops — and themselves, of course — relatively dry.

Even while it rained away, I did manage to keep our FDC the warm, dry and well-lit work place it was supposed to be. I had to contend with a swarm of frustrated III Corps MAAG (Military Assistance and Advisory Group) advisers who passed through to visit the 173rd in the "relative security of the rear . . . the artillery" — and who wanted out of the wet. It also took a great deal of command "presence" to convince our Vietnamese interpreter that the FDC was not his personal hotel room, and to let the other officers around our position know that it wasn't their mess tent.

And the FDC did have enough work cut out for them without playing host to a bunch of dripping interlopers. While we were running this op we had shot up all the 105mm ammo the brigade had brought from Okinawa, and the supply line from the States had not yet filled up. Our brigade S4 kept busy scrounging guns and ammunition anywhere he could, and an odd lot it was. Between propellant charges, fuzes and projectiles, we had 42 different lots of ammo go through the guns before we returned to Bien Hoa.

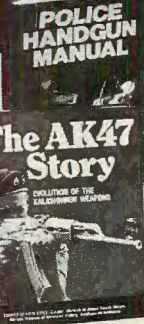
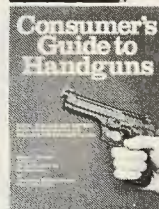
As the operation wound down the infantry withdrew to the LZ which Battery B was occupying, and the lead battalion dropped off their 4.2-inch mortar platoon as they were extracted. I called the platoon leader over and let him know that he was a part of the brigade's fire support element, now comprised of my 105s and his four-deuces.

In older times back at Fort Bragg, 4.2-inch mortars had made up what were called field artillery mortar batteries which were used in support of the 82nd Airborne Division's newly formed battle groups. As I gave the platoon leader orders describing his mission and told him to hook up comms between his chief fire direction computer and my chief fire direction computer, I heard something which I'm sure neither of us were meant to hear.

"Thank God we're back with the field artillery," came a relieved mutter from behind a bush. I never did find out who said it, but I'm sure it was an old comrade in arms from an airborne field artillery mortar battery at Bragg.

Early the next day the second battalion of the Third Herd came into what by now had

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become the extraction LZ. Charlie, being no dummy, hit the infantry during their extraction on the side of the LZ away from the battery. They obviously thought the choppers would get in the way of our guns.

Wrong. Charlie forgot about high-angle fire where the tubes are elevated above 45 degrees and fire like mortars. He also didn't know that we *had* mortars, the 4.2-inchers dropped off by the infantry.

In simple terms, we kicked Charlie's ass that day. I'm told there were a whole bunch of chopper crews who tried to fold their heads into their boots when we opened up, but when they realized what we were doing they admitted it was a damned good idea.

When things calmed down a bit and the extraction swung back into gear, I again saw my great green elephants of the sky, the Blivets, materialize out of the distant haze. We march-ordered the battery, got everything packed aboard, and lifted off from our soggy firing position back to Bien Hoa.

As far as I was concerned, it had been a damned good operation. We had made a new concept — airmobiling artillery around the countryside — work without too many problems. And we had kicked Charlie's butt every time the infantry had asked us to. As the concrete of Bien Hoa came up, the whole battery began to feel what I had felt so many times when leaving my Special Forces camps in the mountains: we were going home. Home at least to dry socks and sleeping bags, hot food prepared by a waiting mess sergeant and his cooks, an accumulation of mail, and maybe a stripe for someone in the battery. It wasn't the U.S. of A., but it would do for the time being.

In the back of our minds, though, we remembered that artillery is never really in reserve. Whether we fired from a flooding rice paddy in the middle of nowhere or from a dry firing pit in Bien Hoa, we were always on call. Maybe the harassment and interdiction schedule tonight would give us a few minutes to BS with our new sister battery across the road, the 161st Royal New Zealand Field Artillery Battery. Or maybe it wouldn't. ☒

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*Continued from page 11*

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● **MIA MIX-UP:** Keeping the MIA/POW issue in the public eye has always been an important part of *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine's editorial policy. In the July issue, SOF reveals U.S. government incompetence in the identification of MIA remains.

● **LIGHT INFANTRY DIVISION:** The U.S. Army has approached the problem of deploying troops overseas with a lighter, leaner fighting force. Unfortunately, there are some problems with the concept. SOF lets you in on them.

● **ARMOR IN ANGOLA:** SOF takes a look at Soviet tanks churning up the bush in Angola. Anti-communist guerrillas there have come up against plenty of armor in their fight to oust the MPLA. SOF is there to tell the story.

● **SOVIET MILITARY SHAKEUP:** The Soviet armed forces are currently undergoing a reorganization of the ranks — the most dramatic since Stalin's Red Army purge of 1937-39. Gorbachev's aim: to enhance the Soviets' fighting capability, even at the cost of some Communist Party direction.

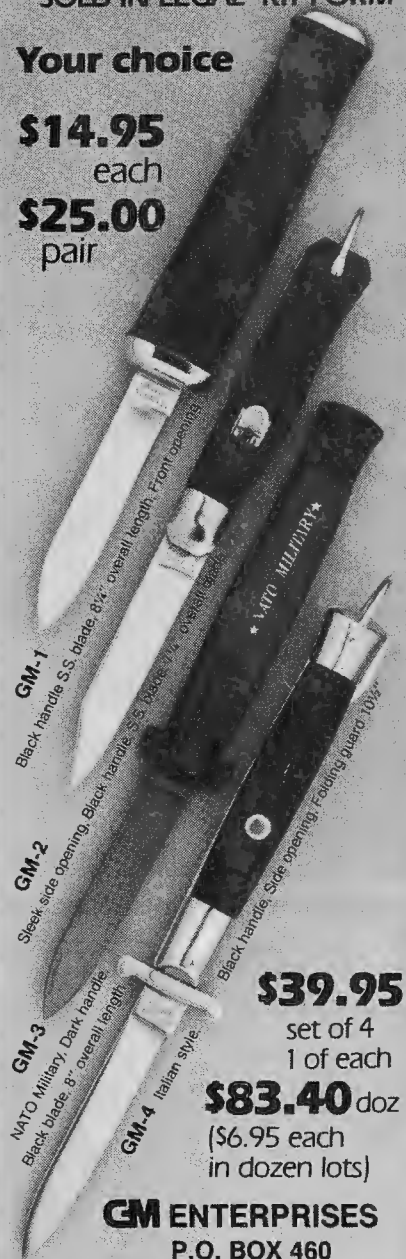
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If you were a military adviser to the South Vietnamese Armed Forces, especially during the 1972 Easter Offensive, please write or call: **Howard C.H. Feng, 2459 10th Ave., Honolulu, HI 96816, (808)948-6697 or 732-7232.** Feng, a second lieutenant in the Army National Guard, is working on a master's thesis analyzing ARVN's response to the 1972 Easter Offensive by the NVA.

A reunion of the **First Special Service Force** — cursed by World War II German commanders as "The Devil's Brigade" — is set for 14-16 August 1986 at the Colonial Inn in Helena, Mont. For more information write: **Mark Radcliff, Force Headquarters, 11815 Quarter Horse Court, Oakton, VA 22124.**



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adventure novel by Barry Sadler, author and composer of "The Ballad of the Green Berets." You might even catch a glimpse of Sadler, SOF's contributing editor for martial arts, who is a frequent visitor at Restaurante Europa.

## INTELLIGENCE MUSEUM...

A National Historical Intelligence Museum is being organized through donations to preserve the history of the spy business in the United States. Displays will span the course of American history and tell through visual displays fascinating stories from many eras. Displays will include items from the American Revolution, including early ciphers and invisible inks, plus extant information on Washington's spy and counterspy network and British surveillance of Ben Franklin. The scope of artifacts expands in the museum's treatment of the Civil War and increases even more for World Wars I and II, Korea, the Cuban Missile Crisis and Vietnam. Those interested in contributing funds should write for further information:

**Martin Cramer, c/o National Historical Intelligence Museum, 1712 I St. NW, Suite 1005, Washington, D.C.**

## CANADIAN DROP ZONE...

An equipment collection point for western Canada has been established for SOF readers who wish to donate nonlethal supplies and material — but not money — for the El Salvador/Nicaragua Defense Fund. Small and medium sizes only on military clothes and boots, please. Mail donations, including canteens, compasses, web gear, etc. (no weapons or ammunition) to: **Wayne Lush, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 35, Cedar, British Columbia, Canada, VOR-1JO.**

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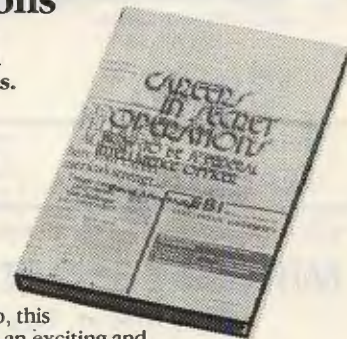
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## MASTER OF TERROR-MONIES...

Iran has recently appointed an interior minister well-suited to his task of keeping tabs on internal dissent and spending money to support terrorism. Hojatollesiam Sayed Ali-Akbar Mohtashami-pur's last job was as ambassador to Syria for Ayatollah Khomeini. During his tenure in Damascus from 1982-85, Mohtashami organized and coordinated the Islamic Jihad terror operations in Lebanon from the Iranian Embassy in Syria, according to separate SOF sources in Washington, Israel and Iraq.

Intelligence sources say Mohtashami was in charge of coordinating a string of terrorist attacks in and around Beirut in 1983, resulting in heavy loss of life. These included the 18 April truck bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Beirut, the truck bombing of the U.S. Marine BLT compound and the French army compound on 23 October, and the 4 November truck bombing of an Israeli army checkpoint near Tyre.

The same sources link Mohtashami to the 1984 truck bombing of the U.S. Embassy annex in the Beirut suburb of Aukar and the 1985 hijacking of TWA flight 847.

Mohtashami was born in Tehran in 1946. He began his theological studies in Qom in 1962. His mentor and spiritual leader, Khomeini, fled to exile in Iraq following an abortive coup in 1963. Mohtashami joined Khomeini in 1966, and they remained in Iraq until 1978, when Khomeini was expelled. Mohtashami followed him to France and became Khomeini's office manager in Paris. He joined Khomeini in a triumphant return to Iran in 1979. He later became a member of Khomeini's select committee to oversee the operation of Mostaz-afin, a special fund taken over from the Shah's old Pahlavi Foundation. Mostaz-afin is reputed to be a major Iranian channel for funding terrorist activities. ✕

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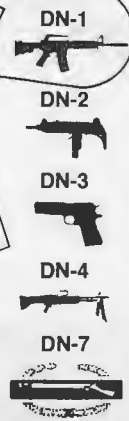
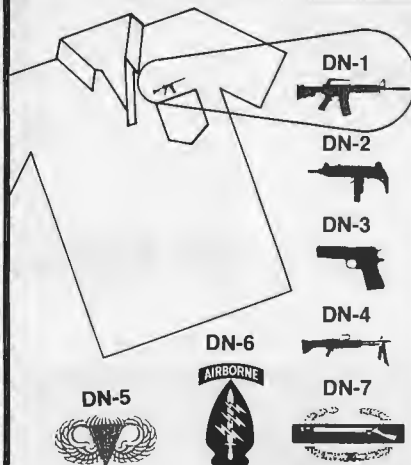


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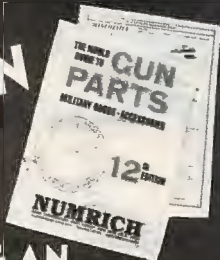
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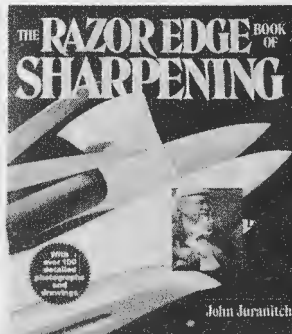
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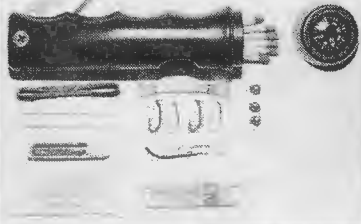
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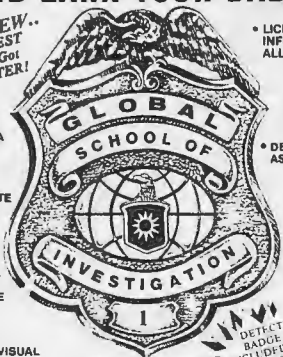
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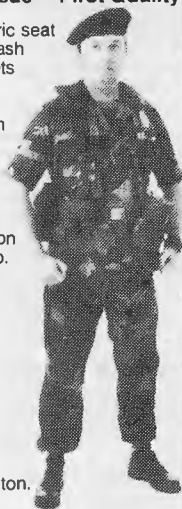
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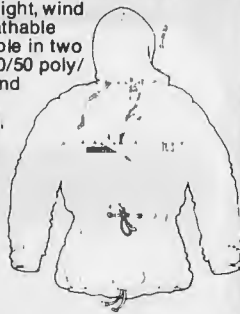
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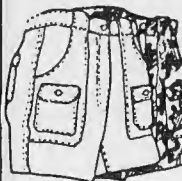
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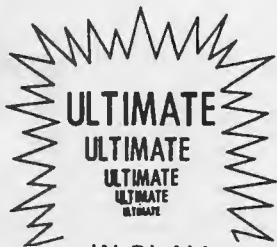
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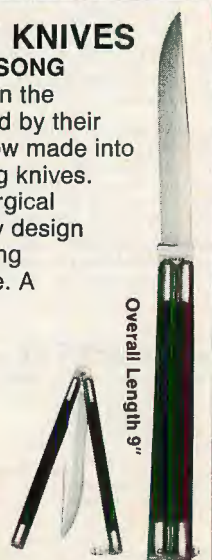
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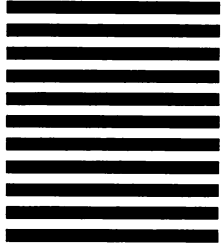
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